

Master Thesis

INSTITUTIONAL POLITICS IN RURAL CHINA:
POST MAO REFORM ERA

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ABSTRACT

There have been various academic attempts to understand state-society relationship in contemporary China, through investigations on shop floor and rural context. These different efforts are targeted on different parts of the variegated empirical world, thus concluding with pieces of contradictory contentions. It is the aim of this thesis to synthesize, reconcile these contradictions and to compile as well as elaborate them into a coherent discourse on the basis of empirical case studies scattered in the country's rural areas.

To develop an encompassing thesis on government-peasant relationship in Post-Mao reform era, three typical patterns of relationship are proposed namely, coercive ritualism, disintegrated autonomy and reactionary subsistence. These constructions seek to generate a wider perspective than the prevailing lopsided and oversimplified versions of debilitated state or autonomous society. At the outset, the defining features of the three are summarily described. Coercive ritualism is characterised by a configuration in which weak peasants are associated with either a strong government or a strong middleman and a weak government. For the disintegrated autonomy, the government, the middleman and the peasant are embedded in a disintegrated circumstances so that the three of them are weak in relation to one another. What the reactionary subsistence attempts to capture is a strong peasant society accompanied with either a weak government or a weak government and strong middleman.

This would then be followed by a meticulous evaluation of the corresponding conditions that are identified to be closely related with

the respective types. These conditions include the nature of agricultural policies, the level of agricultural collectivity, the level of commercialisation and some local peculiarities. The ultimate concern is to a relationship between the relevant constellation of these conditions and the respective types of government-peasant relationship. The final portion is engaged in a discussion that is concluded from the preceding analysis.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Reforms in state socialist countries in recent years have undubiously aroused concern over its formal as well as substantial reaches, impacts and consequences.¹ Presumably, the socialist countries, widely deemed to be an empirical exemplary of the totalitarian model, is contended to undergo a retrenchment of state power and capacity with a corresponding activating of societal impetus during and in the wake of reforms.² Nonetheless, the dynamics of state-society interaction is so intricate that the reform contents, societal contexts and its historical specificity have structured and even complicated the state-society relationship³, rendering the reference frame of the nature of society being 'socialist'⁴ almost futile.

Empirically, contradictory phenomena are witnessed in rural China in recent decades after decollectivisation. There is an impression that peasants are permitted considerable autonomy in making their decisions in production in particular and economic activities in general. Cases as abuses of power by local rural cadres, rural cadres' usurpation of peasant resources, collusion or alliance between cadres and peasants,

1. For a selection of essays on the transformation of institutional structure in socialist countries, see Nee, V. & Stark, D. (ed.) Remaking the Economic Institutions of Socialism: China and Eastern Europe Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989.

2. Tsou, T., "Back from the Brink of Revolutionary-Feudal Totalitarianism," in Nee, V. & Mozingo, D. (ed.) State and Society in Contemporary China Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984.

3. For the existence of web-like society to distort state power and capacity, see Magdal J.S. Strong Societies and Weak States: state-society relationship and state capabilities in the Third World Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

4. For the diversity of socialist countries which are disputed in their stages of historical retreat and its demise, see Brezezinski Z. The Grand Failure: The Birth and Death of Communism in the Twentieth Century New York: Collier Books, 1990.

etc, are not a rare scene. Ruthless control over villages by the state or by cadres is discerned concomitantly with some weightily suppressed activities felt to be incompatible with socialist ideology. Paradoxically enough, while recognising the fact that the cadres may occupy advantageous positions in local villages, it has been reported that rural cadres are difficult to be recruited as many are not willing to become mediators between the government and peasants. The intents of this thesis are three fold. Firstly, it seeks to provide a coherent view on the seemingly contradictory picture. Secondly, it attempts to illuminate on the current debate on state-society relationship in post-Mao reform era by substantiating respective views with corresponding conditions, with particular focus on rural Chinese society. Finally, typical patterns that are theoretically informed to state-society relationship are constructed.

Cases of institutional politics in rural China since the reform era are employed to illustrate the above. There is first a brief review on the literature about state-society relationship in regard to the contemporary rural China politics in this chapter. The arguments as well as researches of the literature are placed in three theoretical perspectives¹ and the possible weaknesses of the respective perspective will be ascertained then.

The intention of formulating these synthesized perspectives is to delineate the circumference within which current literature pertinent to

1. These three theoretical perspectives are synthesized not necessarily according to works of different scholars, but to the nature of arguments and focus. Definite mutual exclusivity of the perspectives would not be strictly adhered to though different kinds of arguments can be visualized crudely from different perspectives.

this issue is to be explored. The subsequent chapters are devoted to the elaboration of the three typical patterns in light of the empirical materials; both time, space distribution and the description of conditions under which the ideal types flourish will be discussed. (This ensuing chapters will vindicate this part empirically.)

The agricultural reform or the so-called decollectivisation of agriculture has been featured with a wide array of instances, such as household responsibility system, specialised households and rural enterprises in later years. Contradictory or even sometimes conflicting theoretical perspectives accounting for the variegated reality can be synthesized under three headings, namely - neo-institutionalism, clientelism and localism.

A Brief Literature Review

As a comparative perspective,¹ the emphasis of neo-institutionalism² is on the allocative mechanisms such as market and collective.³ A rather simple interpretation of neo-institutionalism is

1. The sense of comparative perspective refers to that of the socialist countries, see Stark, D. & Nee V. "Toward an Institutional Analysis of State Socialism" in Nee, V. & Stark, D. (ed.) op.cit., 1989.

2. Neo-institutionalism as a perspective in the context of the transformation of agrarian institutions can be found in Levi M. "The Transformation of Agrarian Institutions: an introduction and perspective" Politics & Society 16, no.2-3 (1985).

3. Another line of analysis following neo-institutionalism is the borrowing of transaction cost approach in discussing state-farmer relationship. In short, their relationship is governed by their relative bargaining power, their transaction costs (costs of monitoring and enforcing policies), and the discount rates. This would not be dealt with in detail here. For details, see Levi, M. Of Rule and Revenue (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

the theory of market transition in state socialism.¹ It contends that state socialism at its transformative stage would experience an expansion of marketlike sector, which is regarded as the second economy in state socialist economies.² Producers can conduct their business in a zone relatively autonomous from the state, though the second economy still lacks a fully legitimated and well-defined private property rights.³ The theory of market transition postulates three sub-theses, namely, market power thesis, market incentive thesis and market opportunity thesis. It propounds the increase of peasant power, as indicated by the growth of household income. As direct producers, they can now appropriate larger share of surplus from the market, relative to the state distributive sector. This is indeed the simplest and most basic proposition of neo-institutionalism.

To expound further, it states that the transition to a market-like economy can stimulate the growth of economic institutions with greater specialization in transactive exchanges.⁴ The state, by establishing a contractual relationship between state and village, can limit its

1. Nee, V., "A Theory of Market Transition: From redistribution to markets in state socialism", American Sociological Review 1999, vol. 54 Oct.

2. The second economy in state socialist China includes all income-generating activity outside the boundaries of the state-regulated and managed economy, including private construction, manufacturing, commerce, services, moonlighting for private gains, etc.

3. As Stark puts it, "The boundaries of the second economy and the relative proportions of its legal, illegal and alegal parts are products of contestation of state and society - a continuously changing outcome of a struggle in which society attempts to create and maintain a sphere of activity relatively autonomous from the state". Stark, D., "Towards an Institutional Analysis of State Socialism", in Nee, V. & Stark, D. (ed.) op.cit. (1999).

4. Nee, V. & Nijjin, S., "Institutional Changes and Economic Growth in China: The view from the villages" Journal of Asian Studies 19, no. 1 Feb 1990.

arbitrary power in interfering directly the village economic activity.¹ The redrawing of state-village boundary may extricate state control from agricultural production, resulting in the subsequent lowering of transaction costs. The property rights can be further consolidated, and the resultant integral structure is in turn favourable to economic growth.

Neo-institutional discussion does not entirely overlook the possible social embeddedness of economic action,² though this appears to be merely the peripheral concern amid its foci. It admits that though there are reforms in rural bureaucracy, the activities of rural cadre can impose negative impact on the village household income.³ Insofar as cadre activities are prevailing in the villages,⁴ the fruits of commercialisation of agricultural would be easily exploited.

Another attempt serves to restrict the application of straightforward version of neo-institutional argument. (This straightforward argument states that the development of market economy can act as a base for an autonomous society favourable to economic

1. The argument that a civil society could never do it alone but requires state power to actively defend its independence can be found in Keane J. Democracy and Civil Society London: Verso, 1995.

2. For a succinct account of such kind of economic action, please see Granovetter Mark, "Economic action and social structure: the problem of embeddedness", American Journal of Sociology vol. 91.

3. Nee, V. & Young, F. W. "Peasant Entrepreneurs in China's Second Economy: an institutional analysis" Economic Development and Cultural Change vol. 39, no. 2 1991.

4. It has to be pointed out that what the cadre activities are are not thoroughly covered in the study.

growth.)¹ The improved version specifies that the state's capability to intervene society would be weakened or even distorted by local or individual interests. This happens when the social groups can successfully gain access to the state power and succeed in the manoeuvre. The state capacity and autonomy is undoubtedly enmeshed in the Guanxi networks in which the state interests would be misplaced. For the neo-institutionalists, this is only regarded as an inevitable stage of organizational recalcitrance. It is maintained that ultimately, the reforms will bring forward a clear-cut and exclusive restructuring of state-society boundary.

Another line of neo-institutionalism concerns whether or not and in what ways the collective have been affected by the rural reform. The main focus still lies on the implications of institutional reconstitution or dismantlement. Decollectivisation or decommunization (in Shue's wordings)² has been inferred to such a great extent that it denotes the transformation of rural villages into companies and corporation. It is disputed that a contractual basis between state and peasant relations will be installed by the responsibility system. Some may assume that the collective ownership of agriculture has even lapsed away.³ It is contended that there is a comprehensive adoption of different kinds of responsibility systems, though the form adopted

1. Nee, Y. "Peasant Entrepreneurship and the politics of regulation in China" in Nee, Y. & Stark, D. (ed.) *op. cit.*, 1989.

2. Shue, Y., "The Fate of Commune" Modern China vol. 10 no. 1 July 1984.

3. Hartford, K. "Socialist agriculture is dead; long live socialist agriculture; organizational transformation in rural China" in Perry, E. J., Wong, C. (ed.) The Political Economy of Reform in Post-Mao China (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

varies in different districts.¹ In this instance, the straightforward equation between the decollectivised agriculture and the establishment of total autonomous village community has been consciously and evidently reserved. Lastly, it has to be reiterated that the entire analytical concern (whether the locus of control over the villages is the state or the local bases) is solely along the line of reorganisation of institution - the collective.

The premise of clientelism² plays a prominent role in informing, in particular, the peasant studies. Based on the research in South East Asia, Scott³ attests the existence and the subsequent evolution of the patron-client ties between landlord and peasant brought forward by the commercialisation of agriculture. One maintains that the peasants' position had been made more vulnerable to the patrons' usurpation because the insecure economy put the peasants in a precarious and involuntary dependence on the patrons, albeit is more diversified in

1. Unger J., "The decollectivisation of the Chinese countryside: a survey of twenty-eight villages" Pacific Affairs 1985-86 no.4 vol.59.

2. A rather abstract and theoretical discussion on patron-client relations has been put forward by S.N. Eisenstadt, Louis Roniger, "Patron-client Relations as a Model of Structuring Social Exchange" Comparative Studies in Society and History vol.22 no.1 Jan. 1980. This is further elaborated in S.N. Eisenstadt, L. Roniger, Patrons, clients and friends: interpersonal relations and the structure of trust in society Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

3. For an early discussion of subsistence ethic and the parallel patron-client relationship, see Scott, J. The Moral Economy of Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976. For a focus on the impact of commercialisation on the patron-client relationship, see Scott, J. "The Erosion of Patron-Client Bonds and Social change in Rural Southeast Asia" in Journal of Asian Studies vol. XXXII no.1 Nov. 1972. A counter discussion of moral economy can be found in Popkin, S. The Rational Peasant: The Political Economy of Rural Society in Vietnam Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979. For a methodological synthesis of the moral economy and rational peasant, see Little D., Understanding Peasant China: case studies in the philosophy of social science New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984.

nature.

Nevertheless, the implanting of patron-client relation in the discussions of local politics at the grass root level in rural China¹ and at the shop floor² only starts in the recent decade. Instead of focussing on the institution as an analytical concern, this perspective appears to magnify the micro-interaction between peasants and local cadres who are assumed to be the patrons possessing requisite resources. On the basis of household registration system, peasants are anchored in the collective. This enables team leaders to possess leverage over peasants before decollectivisation. The arguments further assume that cadres' power is not so much eroded away as diversified among various resource channels created after decollectivisation.³ This kind of dependency is not a one-sided relationship (that is, total reliance of peasants on cadres), as it does not preclude the possibility of passive resistance. In fact, the forms of resistance by peasants and collusion among peasants and cadres take forms in great variety.⁴

The third perspective to state-society relationship in rural China

1. Oi, J. C. State and Peasant in Contemporary China: the political economy of village government. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.

2. Walder, A. G. Communist Neo-Traditionalism: Work and Authority in Chinese Industry. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.

3. For details, please see Oi, J. C. "From Cadres to Middlemen: The commercialisation of rural government" Problems of Communism Sept-Oct, 1986; "Peasant households between plan and market: cadre control over agricultural inputs" Modern China 12, no. 2 April 1986; "Market Reform and Corruption in Rural China" Studies in Comparative Communism vol. XXII no. 2/3 summer/autumn, 1989.

4. Scott, J. C. "Everyday forms of resistance" in Colburn, F. D. (ed.) Everyday forms of peasant resistance. New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc. 1989. To have a more specific treatment in rural China, can see Zweig, D. "Struggling over land in China: Peasant Resistance after collectivisation, 1966-86", *ibid.*

is localism, which adopts a rather macro framework. A typical exposition can be found in Shue's work.¹ It adopts an intelligible dichotomy of state and localism, which attempts to capture the phenomenon of local self-subsistence against state intrusion of any kind. Historically and geographically rooted local interests, gentry as well as peasants, would persistently act as a buffer diluting the penetration of imperial state action. It is disputed that in communist China, the institutions of collectivized structure such as commune, production brigade, production team and cumbersome administrative as well as party hierarchies have only reinforced the solidification of local interests. The overlapping of such vertical, horizontal party and governmental structures has made it difficult for state policies to be implemented at the lowest rural level, which is consequently, at the discretion of locality, or more exactly, the interests of team leaders and peasants together.²

The logical account of state-society relationship in the post-Mao reform era, based on the above analysis, contends the intended state attempts to strengthen state capacity in the locality. This is achieved by specifying definitely the scope of state jurisdiction as opposed to the private sphere. It is distinct from the formerly well-researched proposition that the intended state action performs as a retrenchment of

1. Shue, V. The Reach of the State: Sketches of the Chinese Body Politic Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980.

2. This argument has its historical ground albeit in a modified version. It is contended that the rural communities would experience a period of cyclical open structure and closure during the period of interdynastic chaos. The progressive closure of village local system, typified as localism, would be a rational response to an unstable and threatening environment. Conversely, the progressive opening up of village community has also represented a rational response to a stable and benign environment. For details, see Skinner G.W. "Chinese Peasants and the Closed Community: an open and shut case" Comparative Studies in Society and History vol. 17 1975.

governmental power. The argument of localism maintains that local autonomy is restricted and structured by the policies of decollectivisation. As a result, the local configuration may facilitate further state control and penetration.

However, the intended expansion of state machinery and apparatus would engender an anarchic situation whereby the state is beyond its capability to command.¹ Such experience is found to be the case in the early decades of this century in North China where the expansion of the power of the Chinese state was concomitant to the growing anarchy in local society. State involution is named after this situation since state organisations expand not through the increasingly efficient use of existing administrative resources but through the replication, extension of the inherited pattern. This renders the sustenance of command over local society by the state intrinsically difficult.

Before proposing the construction of state-society relationship that lays the framework for the ensuing analysis, one has to underscore the shortcomings of the literature and research mentioned above in the discourse of state-society relationship. For the neo-institutionalism, the emphasis is positioned on the impact of dismantlement and revitalisation of such allocative mechanisms as collective and market, which are assumed to structure the relationship between state and peasant intermediately. It is not to renounce their strengths in

1. This argument is based on the study of local finances in North China, 1911-35. Although the period is not in the communist era or in the post-Mao reform era, the situation depicted may generate insights on the state-society interface. See, Duara, P. Culture, Power and the State: Rural North China, 1900-42 Stanford: Stanford University press, 1995.

depicting such relationship here.¹ However, it has to be highlighted that it is a lopsided predilection for equating market and autonomous society, which indeed comprises a wide array of institutions.

For the clientelism, evidently, the interaction between local cadres and peasants has been amplified to such an extent that this sole relationship is assumed to capture the state-peasant relationship. The clientelistic relationship may govern the acquisition of means of production and the sale of produces or products. One may be interested in ascertaining the extent of domains of peasant life that may be affected by the cadres at this juncture. For the localism, the easy cooperation and collective action of local community against state action at whatever circumstances is its apparent conclusion. Alliance or collusion between local cadres and peasants is presumed to be formed amicably and state action seems to be regarded as infringing their interests collectively. The loose dichotomy between localism and state is propounded at the expense of the necessary attention to the internal diversity and heterogeneity among different groupings or even within them.

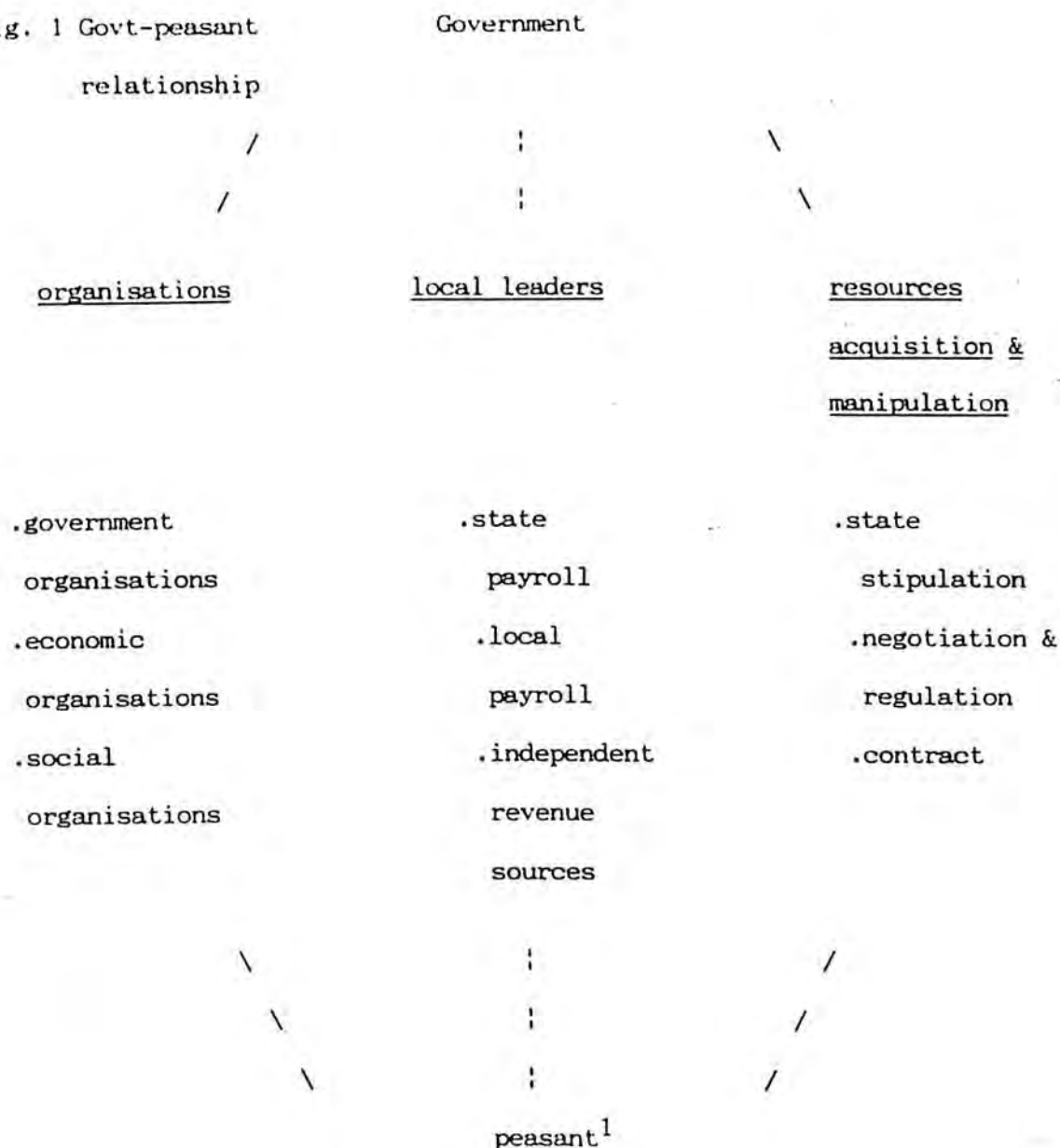
To come to grips with the government-peasant² relationship, the

1. In fact, the origin of idea of civil society may be regarded as laying in a complex of autonomous institutions - economic, religious, intellectual and political - distinct from the family, the clan, the locality and the state. For details, see Shila Edward, "The Virtue of Civil Society" Government & Opposition vol.26 no.1 Winter 1991.

2. "Government-peasant relationship" is adopted here to elaborate the relationship instead of the notion of state-peasant relationship, which may connote a less concrete meaning for analysis.

following diagram may help demonstrate the situation. Mediating between state and peasant there are three types of meso fabric: organisation, local leaders and resources. That means, state capacity over peasant may be constrained or enabled by the respective actors in these three domains. Consequently, these meso fabric may be regarded as the means through which the government exercises its control.

Fig. 1 Govt-peasant
relationship



The above diagram exhibits the relationship between the government and peasants. The supposition is, different combinations of organisation, local leaders and resources acquisition and manipulation can lead to different types of government-peasant relationship. Prior to

1. To have an elaboration of peasant society with special reference to the concept of civil society and public sphere in the China context, see Strand D. "Protest in Beijing: Civil Society and Public Sphere in China" Problems of Communism vol. XXXIX May June 1990.

constructing the possible types of government-peasant relationship, it would be useful to elucidate what the meso fabric alludes to. Political organisation refers mainly to the governmental and party hierarchies. In the post-Mao reform era, the lowest level that is legitimately vested with governmental structure is the township government (xiang). The reforms that separated political and economic authority and established new local political structures began in 1982 in accordance with the Draft Constitution of the People's Republic of China. With the abolition of communes, production brigades and production teams, a new structure had been instituted. The new political structures below county level include the township, the administrative village and village groups, and each corresponds to former administrative division of and within the commune. The following figure illustrates the changes.¹

1. This is extracted from Croll J. Elizabeth, "Reform, Local Political Institutions and the Village Economy in China" in Journal of Communist Studies vol. 3 Dec 1997 no. 4. In fact, there are certain local organisation with political affiliations, e.g. Communist Youth League, militia, but their importance has declined drastically. These would not be dealt with specifically here.

Fig. 2 Local Administrative Structure

Chinese Terms	English Terms	Past Equivalent
Xian	County	County
↓	(County Government)	↓
↓	↓	↓
Xiang	Township	Commune
↓	(Township Government)	↓
↓	↓	↓
Xingzhengcun	Administrative Village	Production
↓	(Village committee)	brigade
↓	↓	↓
Cunmin Xiaozu	Village Group	Production
	(Village leader)	team

The economic organisations comprise recently formed institutions oriented to production or auxiliary to production considerations, which include economic/supply cooperatives¹ (supplying chemical fertilizer, pesticide, tractors, combine harvester, etc.), commune enterprises (later renamed as rural enterprises since the abolition of communes), horizontal economic cooperations (cooperation with organisation back up

1. Some name it as cooperative store or supply and marketing cooperative, see China News Analysis, vol. 1259 April 23 1994, China News Analysis, vol. 1251 January 2 1994. Initially, the cooperative store is linked to the national commercial network, never to release it to fulfil its role for the peasant, its original shareholder. It is remarked by Fei Xiaotong as the lowest rung of the State monopoly. However, it has experienced some changes. A Report from the Policy Research Office of the Henan Province Party Committee has remarked that to survive in the competition with the economic unions and joint agricultural-commerce ventures, the cooperative store should take initiatives in seeking markets and suppliers, to multiply services, to set up networks of small stores, to create mutual help associations, to protect commercial entrepreneurs. In a nutshell, the cooperative store has changed from a mere state extension of peasant service provision to an organisation active in economic coordination.

from same industries), vertical economic cooperations (cooperation for easy access to market, various means of production), cooperatives among professional households and specific households. Indeed, some are monopolized and statist in nature (economic/supply cooperatives) while others are voluntary and private in nature.

The social organisations, voluntary in nature, include lineage organisations which are common in south but not north China.¹ Their existence may be latent until need for mobilized action arises when there are conflicts among lineages. The institution of communes, production brigades and teams incorporates these geographically rooted organisations, rendering the cooperations and conflicts among lineages latent. Their transience augments with the restructuring of local artificial institutions.

Insofar as the governmental organisations overpower other organisations, governmental power can be exercised to the fullest of its potential. At the other end of the continuum, governmental power is at its lowest where social organisations infuse both governmental and economic associations. Thus, variables of nominal scale (that is, categorical classification) can possess the characteristics of ordinal scales simultaneously.

Different payroll structure of local rural cadres suggests disparate reach of state capacity. State-paid administrative personnel,

1. Publications in China would regard party committee, postal and communication office, village committee, economic cooperatives, etc as social organisations. With very few exceptions, they are all fraught with party politics. Therefore, they are not treated as voluntary social organisations here.

state cadres, are rarely found beneath the town/township government level. As such, cadres at township level are prone to rely on the state hierarchical structure for promotion. They thus act more as agents of state than representatives of their villages.¹

For the brigade and team leaders (those at administrative village level and village group level), their wage and grain rations come from the village treasury. Their emolument is highly dependent on the collective performance of the village. After the abolition of communes, former brigades, village cadres are vested with power to directly administer peasants. Their power ranges from administering contracts, allocating jobs, to the delivery of former collective tractors, machines, etc.² Their reliance on the government gradually lessen.³

The newly emerged local leaders are part and parcel of the recent dynamic changes. Possessing the necessary access to resources through networks, connections or other means, they are mostly former cadres, who get rich soon after decollectivisation. They occupy important positions in both the economic and political arena with their cadre background. With their rather independent sources of income in the market transactive sector, they become autonomous in relation to the government and the village. (Their earnings may still come partly from the state

1. This kind of state-village tug-of-war dynamics with the interface on positions of local cadre can be found in the elaborations in Huang, P.C.C. The Peasant Family and Rural Development in the Yangzi Delta, 1950-1999 Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990.

2. Oi, J. C. (1999) op.cit.

3. This would be especially so when the production team coincides with the boundary of natural villages, which can informally influence the selection of team leaders. This can be found in Huayangqiao, see Huang P.C.C. (1990) ibid.

redistributive sector or from local village, but it has to be pinpointed that their positions are being inflated by their overlapping though quite independent positions.)

In resources acquisition and manipulation, the greatest governmental control is in the monopoly for the purchase and sale of grain (tongou tongxiao). The market is deliberately suppressed, which some term as state stipulation. The monopolised purchase and sale of grain was commonly in early state policies in the 50's. Peasants' agricultural harvest was arranged under effective government control and extraction.¹

Negotiated price for agricultural produce has been introduced to supplement the monopoly in purchase and sale. Grain left after the unified purchase and sales can be sold in market. Surplus grain can be released to the state at "negotiated price", which are set higher than the price of unified purchase but possibly lower than the market price.² The quantum of governmental control over peasants allowed in such negotiation and bargaining would be medium, between that of state stipulation and market.

1. It has been analysed that peasant resistance is dependent on four factors, namely, ideology, personnel, rural structure and campaigns. This framework is applied in the context of revolutionary China. For details, see Zweig, D. "Struggling over Land in China: Peasant Resistance after Collectivization, 1966-86" in Colburn F. D. (ed.) 1989, op.cit. One may challenge in what ways and under what context the state policies have been actually implemented in rural context. It may be further propounded that peasants only reacted to each policies according to their personal, family and collective interests. The policy implementation details in rural China are uncovered since 1949, in Zweig, D. Agrarian Radicalism in China, 1969-1991 Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989.

2. This is accentuated in "Document No.1, 1954" which stipulates the contraction of unified and mandatory state purchases of agricultural commodities and the expansion of "negotiated purchases". For details, see Ash, R. F. "The Evolution of Agricultural Policy" China Quarterly Dec 1954 no. 116.

As the government abandons its monopolistic procurement of agricultural products in the reform era, the adoption of contract is given formal expression.¹ With the advent of household responsibility system, contract agreement among peasants or between cadres and peasants shows growing importance in accounting for the respective terms of cooperation and responsibilities. In effect, the state retreat to a residual role and acts only to guarantee the procurement of grain and cotton under signed contracts.² It can be ascertained that state control over agricultural commodities is the lowest in contractual and market

1. The meaning of contract adopted in China would require further explanation, which may be distinct from that of the sense in market economy in general. A case of contract in Anhui Province may help illustrate its meaning. The main features of the contract include: first, the implication of an engagement by the administration to assure the redistribution of a specific quota of income, second, the responsibility of the producer to fulfill the quota category imposed by the state yearly agricultural planning and third, the contractual protections enjoyed by the farming unit and its members from interference in their productive tasks. China News Analysis vol. 1251 January 2, 1984. It can be maintained that contracts only delimit the production boundary between state and peasants, who may subject to less arbitrary state interference. The protection may not be total. Compulsory purchase in the Yangzi Delta was abandoned in 1985 and 1986 with the adoption of contract due to a glut in state grain and cotton. As the glut disappeared, compulsory sales returned with shortages in 1987-88 though it is still regarded as contracts, see Huang P.C.C. (1990) op.cit.

2. This is signified in "Document No.1 1985", released on 1 January 1985. Indeed, the mechanism in operation for resources acquisition and manipulation is the so-called "double-track system". The dual system governed that some purchases prices and even sale, distribution of agricultural commodities would be determined by market forces while some still guided by the state on contractual basis. Therefore, it is noted that the various constructs (state stipulation, negotiation and regulation, contract) mentioned in the text is only a simplicity and typification in order to have a lucid abstraction to facilitate the discussion of government-peasant in the ensuing sections.

situations.¹

Endowed with the above indicators in portraying the relative strengths of government, middleman² and peasant, we can construct concretely what we mean by strong government, weak government, strong middleman, weak middleman, strong peasant and weak peasant. Theoretically, there are eight different combinations of government, middleman and peasant relationship as depicted in the following diagram.

1. Possible revision of agricultural policies may entirely constrict the scope of peasant autonomy specified by state stipulation, negotiation and regulation, and contracts. The monopolized purchase of some previously released agricultural commodities was revived in 1989. What the state control over agricultural commodities in market situations refers to, is the kind of government-peasant relationship in that context, regardless of the possible alteration of this situation.

2. Middleman, by locating in different kinds of organisation, enjoying varied sorts of payroll structure and possessing different types of resources acquisition and manipulation means, may act as an agent of the state (furthering state interests) or a local leader (seeking for self and/or local interests). On that account, the middleman per se may concurrently play a significant role in shaping government-peasant relationship. Therefore, to take the empirical world into consideration, middlemen are treated here as both the meso-fabric mediating between government and peasant, and an actor in determining government-peasant relationship. In fact, the characteristic of traditional Chinese locality is commonly denoted as a setting in which bureaucrats, (agents of the imperial state), gentry, (agents of local and self interests), and peasants interact with one another, a constituting feature of Chinese village.

Fig. 3 Permutation of government-peasant relationship

<u>Government</u> ¹	<u>Middleman</u>	<u>Peasant</u>
Strong	Strong	Strong
Strong	Strong	Weak
Strong	Weak	Strong
Strong	Weak	Weak
Weak	Strong	Strong
Weak	Strong	Weak
Weak	Weak	Strong
Weak	Weak	Weak

Orthodoxical analysis on state-society relationship builds on the premise that the state-society relationship is a zero-sum game. It maintains that a strong and penetrable state is incompatible with a strong civil society which embraces a significant number of voluntary associations, which in turn are capable of making decisions immune from the state's arbitrary interference. As a corollary, a strong society is often argued to be associated with a weak and fragmented state. By the same token, every portion of society is deemed to be repressed by a omnipotent and omnipresent state.

In the subsequent analysis and the above diagram, the rationale of the theoretical construct is based on the supposition that the axial dynamic development of state and society can be independent of each other though there may be a certain quantum of interaction between them. Put in another way, a monolithic view of zero-sum game between state and

1. 'Government' refers to rural and local government here, in subsequent discussion and analysis, rather than to central government.

society¹ is too simple to explain the reality. Some seemingly paradoxical combinations, such as mutual growth or mutual decay as constructed in the previous diagram are equally convincing. To have a more elaborate description of the eight types of integrated configuration among the government, middleman and peasant, the defining features² of a strong government and strong middleman³ etc has to be expanded on.

1. This line of analysis which adopts a comparative-historical approach with reference to the China context has been raised by Shue, V. (1989) op.cit. However, this argument has not been subject to vigorous empirical substantiation. A comparative framework in regard to this argument has been applied to several countries, such as Chile, Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil. The analysis can be seen in Stepan A. "State Power and the Strength of Civil Society in the Southern Cone of Latin America" in Evans P.B., Rueschemeyer D., Skocpol T. (ed.) Bringing the State Back in (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). Also, for the concepts of state capacity and autonomy, see Skocpol T. "Bringing the state back in: strategies of analysis in current research" in Evans, P.B. et al, *ibid* (1985). For the concern on a separate analysis of state and bureaucrat power as two actors instead of a combined one, see Heper, M. "The State and Public Bureaucracies: a comparative and historical perspective" & Kraus, R., Vanneman, R.D. "Bureaucrats versus the State in Capitalist and Socialist Regimes" Comparative Studies in Society and History vol. 27 1985. Also, a more detailed analysis on the types of state autonomy which takes such separation into account, can be found in Nordlinger, E.A. On the Autonomy of the Democratic State Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981.

2. The elaboration of defining features as follows appear to be cumbersome but this demarcation has taken into account the possibility that there can be simultaneously strong government and strong peasant together. In this case, one has to realise that strong state and weak society would neither be the necessary companion nor strong state tantamount to weak society.

3. There is the possibility that the notion of 'strong' and 'weak' would not be sufficient to arrest the all-out dynamics but only to provide the beginning guidepost for delineating respective basic features of government, middleman and peasant. Since the actual meaning of some paradoxical combinations as strong government and strong peasant, weak government and weak peasant may connote some additional meaning (to be dealt with later) rather than that denoted *prima facie*.

Defining Features of Strong Government

- predominant governmental structures
- remuneration to cadres mainly based on state payroll
- resources allotted and distributed basically on state stipulation

Defining Features of Weak Government

- dismemberment of governmental structures
- inadequate remuneration to state-payroll cadres
- ineffectively coordinated and implemented state stipulation

Defining Features of Strong Middleman

- occupying positions in several organisations
- independent source of revenue
- resources acquisition and manipulation basically dependent on negotiation and regulation

Defining Features of Weak Middleman

- occupying positions in several organisations
- source of income determined both by government and locality
- resources acquisition and manipulation fundamentally reliant either on state stipulation or contract

Defining Features of Strong Peasant

- predominant social organisations
- revenue source essentially based on locality
- contract as the integral mechanism in allocating resources

Defining Features of Weak Peasant

- paucity of social organisations
- revenue sources primarily based on locality but insufficient and fluctuate
- contract weak in coordinating resources distribution

The meso fabric mediating government and peasant, theoretical possibilities of disparate combination of government and peasant, together with the defining features of respective strengths of government, middleman and peasant, help grapple with the core of research problem, that is, the formulation of three typical situations depicting government-peasant relationship¹. Three typical situations are identified, namely, coercive ritualism, disintegrated autonomy and reactionary subsistence.²

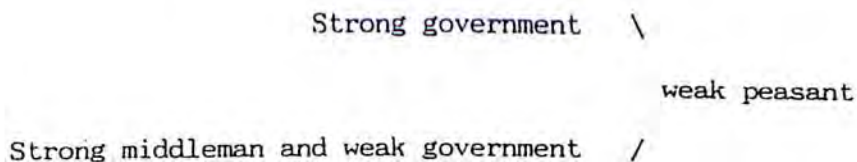
In coercive ritualism, the defining features of peasant are their weakness, whose life is greatly constrained by the government and middleman. For instance, what to produce, at what price the government will purchase from peasants, would be out of the peasants' control. The local cadres, as the agents of state, find themselves opportunity to further their own interests at the expense of that of the peasants. Market is impotent in asserting the interests and autonomy of peasants against that of the government and middleman. Instead, the monopolized

1. This relationship is mainly constructed on the basis of the nature of government-peasant relationship, but not on the consideration whether the peasant society is economically sprouting or declining, which is the essential yardstick of neo-institutionalism.

2. It has to be admitted that these three ideal situations is society-centred in outlook but the following discussions would bring forward its interaction with the government whenever possible.

unified purchase and sale over peasants' produce would be exemplary. No doubt governmental control may develop in a great extent vis-a-vis peasant but such control would not bear any implications on the governmental capacity in reforming the peasant society. Nor is it capable of imposing or creating a kind of social rest for the peasant. The form of government action is not so much a general matter of construction as usurpation. This can be represented diagrammatically as follows:

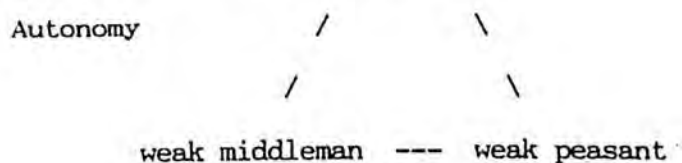
Fig. 4 Coercive Ritualism



The premise of disintegrated autonomy attempts to depict a situation whereby not only rural governmental structures are incapable of implementing policies. The dismantlement of governmental structures renders an ineffective institution of policies. Meanwhile, though the peasants are free of governmental interference or intrusion of whatever kind, prosperity does not necessarily follow. Indeed, the peasants are fraught with predicaments that would have otherwise been controlled, contained or even managed by governmental interference. Leaving a free hand of rural management and development to the peasants means not rural order but chaos. Among peasants there are conflicts and disorders. It is beyond the local cadres' ability to act as an independent local leader. None of the three actors can dominate over one another such that each of them is highly autonomous from the others, resulting in a paralyzed

stalemate.¹ A shorthand representation would be like this:

Fig. 5 Disintegrated weak government



There are two variants within the perimeter of reactionary subsistence. This kind of peasant society may, in some cases, imply that not only can the peasants have unrestrained access to resources, such as inputs of production, access to market - both labour and product market, but also institute their own networks of association cooperation to guarantee their access. The close cooperations enable them to be quite independent of governmental intended control over certain essential means of production. However, reactionary subsistence may also happen in the context where a sprouting peasant economy may not be a necessary condition.

The first variant of reactionary subsistence alludes to the marginal struggle among government, middleman and peasants, in whatever form of collusion or alliances, commonly visible in nature. Implicit resistance may take the form of misreporting grain harvest by peasants as a response to an unrealistically high production quota. The launching of special work team by the government to oversee the peasant routine

1. The concern for the premises of action and order is inspired by Alexander, J.C. Action and Its Environment: toward a new synthesis New York: Columbia University Press, 1959, especially chapter 1, Social-structural analysis: presuppositions, ideologies, empirical debates & chapter 10, Action and its environments.

harvest would be a kind of device to counteract peasants' tacit strategy. Such strategic response designed by each other would possibly result in certain conflictual situations. A tense cadre-peasant relationship currently discerned in some provinces characterises the situations. Grievances among peasants would be subsequently aroused by the rural cadres' abuse of power. The basis of bargaining power for the peasants and middleman may rely either on their escalating economic profile or social networks or both.

The second variant sketches the encroachment of peasant economy towards the rural government, usually invisible and less violent in nature, to the extent that the government structures have been absorbed, incorporated and even restructured by the parameters of peasant economy. This peasant absorption of rural administrative apparatus may take place under the combined efforts of peasants and middleman. Local consent have to be secured before the appointment of local cadres. State agents have to consider granting concessions, administrative or economic in nature, to both peasants and middleman in regard to the practical concern of the viability of rural administration. Unavoidably, rural governmental structure would be easily converted into an arena where the peasant economy can claim its stake. In addition, the establishment of rural government and internal conflicts among those state agents may only mirror conflictual boundary of peasant economy, in some respects, along the lines of different lineages.¹ Even so, the restructuring of rural administrative machinery would assume the form of debilitating

1. It may well be possible that local cadres would only be the spokesmen of different sectors of rural interests.

governmental machinery reflected in the withdrawal of local cadres, who are likely to become peasant entrepreneur (professional or specialised household). This is a manifestation of economic absorption of rural local administration. Both the middleman and peasant, by possessing ever increasing economic positions, can adopt their own stance vis-a-vis the government which can function effectively in villages only with cooperation of these two partners. A diagram showing such status would be:

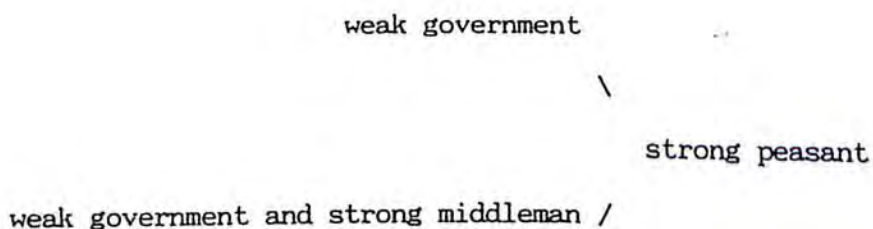


Fig. 6 Reactionary Subsistence

CHAPTER 2 TIME & SPACE DISTRIBUTION

In this chapter, the boundary of the subject matter is demarcated (the details of methodology and the sources of material for empirical analysis will be discussed in the appendix). This is primarily based on the statistical data published by the Zhongguo Tongji Nianjian (ZGTJNJ). For a more concrete description of coercive ritualism, disintegrated autonomy and reactionary subsistence, further elaborations would be along two palpable dimensions. A succinct mention on geographical and temporal distribution of these types will be delivered here.¹ In the following chapters, the respective types of government-peasant relationship will be delved with various illustrations.

The definition of agriculture in China is itself a glossary: agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, subsidiaries and fishery. In recent years, the discussions on agriculture are closely related with and extended to commerce and industries which are regarded as the subsidiaries previously. In regard to the classification on the respective values of productivity generated in rural areas, a wider frame is adopted for the classification, see the following table for the breakdowns.

1. Giddens, A. The Constitution of Society Oxford: Polity Press, 1985. Further elaborations on time-space distanciation as one of the features of modernity can be found in Giddens, A. The Consequences of Modernity Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990.

Table. 1 Total Value of Productivity in Rural Villages (as at 1988)
(in billion yuan)

(extracted from ZGTJNJ 1989)

Agricultural productivity value ¹	5865.27
Agricultural industrial productivity value	4781.16
Agricultural construction productivity value	895.33
Agricultural transport productivity value	434.44
Agricultural commerce, food and beverage productivity value	558.49

Table. 2 Total Value of Agricultural Productivity (as at 1988)
(in billion yuan)

(extracted from ZGTJNJ 1989)

Agricultural produce productivity value	3276.88
Agricultural forestry productivity value	275.30
Agricultural animal husbandry productivity value	1597.57
Agricultural subsidiaries productivity value	393.05
Agricultural fishery productivity value	322.47

The relative proportion of labour force engaging in the respective sectors is roughly proportional to that of the value of agricultural productivity, so it would not be repeated here. The reason for indicating the productivity value of the respective sectors is to deduce

1. This agricultural productivity value equals to the summation of the forthcoming agricultural produce productivity value, agricultural forestry productivity value, agricultural animal husbandry productivity value, agricultural subsidiaries productivity value and agricultural fishery productivity value.

the relative significance of each sector. Their relative significance is used as the yardstick to select the appropriate sectors to illustrate the government-peasant relationship.

The agricultural productivity value (5865.27 billion yuans) and the agricultural industrial value (4781.16 billion yuans) occupy a significant proportion of the total value of productivity in rural villages, and thus would be subjects of my analysis. For the total value of agricultural productivity per se, evidently, the agricultural produce productivity value (3276.88 billion yuans) and the agricultural animal husbandry productivity value (1597.57 billion yuans) are identified as significant sectors for illustrating the implications of government-peasant relationship. In cases selected particular attention would be paid to these sectors.

The geographical distribution of the three types of relationship is of two levels. In the macro-level, analysis will be done on provincial distribution (provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities), inland-coastal dichotomy, rich-poor dichotomy. The micro-level analysis includes: hilly inland-navigable river dichotomy and the prevalence of rural enterprises¹. The tremendous spatial diversity of rural China precludes a comprehensive demonstration of a distribution of different types of government-peasant relationship by the handful of dichotomies

1. The recognition of micro-level distribution would further complicate the distribution based mainly on macro-level distribution, but it is studied so that hopefully the diversified distribution of the three types can be discerned more realistically. (The effect of macro-level distribution would be similar to that of intervening variables.) The actual diversified distribution might only be partially represented here even with the inclusion of the micro-level distribution. The dichotomy presented here is neither strictly adhered to nor a totally mutually exclusive one.

listed above.¹ But still, the dichotomies prove to be useful as indicators of the general trend of the geographical distribution.

Macro Spatial Distribution

Self-autonomous regions, as opposed to the common provinces and municipalities, are more likely to be characterised with the disintegrated autonomy² since these regions intrinsically suggest the existence of state authorities that are intentionally self-restricted in nature, in order to allow for certain level of autonomy for the minorities. This would, at its best efforts, be maintained unless the minorities rebel against state orders. Basically, the pre-existing state institutional structure has encouraged the emergence of the disintegrated autonomy. By and large, both the Ningxia Huizu Zizhiqu and Xinjiang Uygur Zizhiqu can be regarded as sharing this type of government peasant relationship.³

In the coastal provinces, which are usually richer ones, either coercive ritualism or reactionary subsistence prevails. Examples are the

1. In addition, the limited amount of empirical cases collected from the periodicals published in China has foreclosed such possibility. The discussions of the pervasiveness and limitations of this collection of cases would be dealt with in the appendix.

2. For this study, the spatial parameters only serve as structural indicators on the distribution. Neither a sufficient nor a determining relationship is implied in the discussions.

3. See "Village and economic development in the poor region" 1986 no.5, "The economic thought of poverty" 1989 no.1, "Ningxia national minority cadre" 1989 no.3, "Discussions on the villages in national minority region" 1989 no.3, "Survey and discussions on the sale and market cooperatives in the county of Yanchi in Ningxia" Ningxia She Hui Ke Xue, "Making good for the market and sale cooperatives in the autonomous region" Xinjiang She Hui Ke Xue 1986 no.2.

Guangdong, Fujian and Zhejiang provinces. Relatively free economic transactive exchanges commanding a country-wide market¹ in Guangdong is an example of reactionary subsistence. Counties in Zhejiang also demonstrate a rather autonomous economy relatively free from arbitrary cadre influence, as reflected in their quite independent sources of village income. These counties are Cangnan, Pingyang, Ruian, Cixi, Fuyang, Tonglu, Deqing, Xinchang, Yuyao, etc.² Fujian is similar to Zhejiang in this aspect.³

Interestingly, coercive ritualism is also found in the richer coastal areas. The county of Nanhai in Guangdong⁴, Wuxi in Jiangsu⁵ are typical examples. The reason may be that the macro spatial distribution is greatly diluted by some micro spatial parameters, as discussed below.

The counties in the poorer provinces as Shaanxi, Gansu, Henan, Anhui and Guizhou (which is also hilly) are largely restricted by the state sector in the provision of the inputs of production. Further expansion of market outlet is under the auspices of cadre efforts. These areas are characterised by coercive ritualism. For instance, Longli, Zunyi, Guiding county in Guizhou, Lingtao, Dingxi in Gansu, Dingyuan in Anhui, Tangyin in Henan, Luochuan, Zhidan Wuqi in Shaanxi are illustrative examples. Although they are only a small portion of the

1. "The agriculture in the Pearl Delta" Guangdong She Hui Ke Xue 1987 no.1.

2. "Insights of Wenzhou agricultural commodity market" Zhejiang Xue Kan 1988, no.1.

3. Nee V. "A Theory of Market Transition" American Sociological Review 1990 vol.54 Oct.

4. "Development of new mode of township enterprises" Xue Shu Yan Jiu 1988 no.4.

5. "Synchronization of three models" Jiang Hai Xue Kan 1988 no.5.

counties in each of the province, their ramifications should not be underestimated.

Micro Spatial Distribution

Proximity to navigable river and the existence of burgeoning rural enterprises may considerably moderate the effect of macro spatial distribution. To cite one case, some counties in the province of Anhui, situating at lower Yangtze and thus rich in raw materials with wide markets, are endowed with certain autonomy. Specifically, Lujiang, Wuwei, Hexian in Anhui are examples of reactionary subsistence, rather than coercive ritualism.

On the contrary, the micro context of rural enterprises entitles the cadres as well as the state to appropriate the earnings of peasants working in the enterprises.¹ The province of Guangdong demonstrates the operation of collective remnants in redistributing the surplus earnings of peasants serving the rural enterprises. So is the case in Nanghai county.

All in all, in order to have a more accurate description of the distribution of different types of government-peasant relationship, both the macro and micro context have to be considered. The overlapping of contradictory types of relationship is a product of the interplay of both the macro and micro level forces.

1. Vogel, E. One step ahead in China Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959.

Temporal Distribution

Temporal distribution is to be dealt together with changes in agricultural policy. Abrupt policy changes are found at several periods. The first obviously refers to the period immediately after the promulgation of the implementation of household responsibility system (1979-80). Peasants respond differently to the changes. In poorer regions, such as Hebei and Anhui, which received minimal help from the collective originally, the collectives faced with the severe challenge of being dismantled since the peasants were anxious to have a share of the collective property. This is apparently a case of disintegrative autonomy whereby the strength of collective control has dropped to the lowest. Cadres in the collective were not instructed with detailed commands to handle the peasants' response. In fact, cadres were uncertain of the extent of their authority, and thus what their proper role was. The result was an autarchic peasant society.

Reactionary subsistence also surfaces in these periods. In Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Liaoning, a high level of collectivity has customarily been satisfying to the entertained peasants, since the pre-existing collective structure succeeds in generating a relatively decent living standard. Uprooting of collectives served only to infringe both their collective and personal interests. It is not uncommon for peasants and local cadres in these areas to join forces in ignoring or even resist the policy¹.

1. Zweig D. "Opposition to Change in Rural China: the system of responsibility and people's commune" Asian Survey vol. XXIII no. 7 July 1983.

After the explicit articulation of the dismantlement of commune and the replacement of township or village government in 1983, there was a call for the formal establishment of township enterprises which embody the characteristics of former communes or brigade enterprises. Voices are loud in the provinces of Anhui, Jiangsu. Numerous enterprises were formally established since then. Peasants already ploughing the field were given the option to work in collective enterprises for more secure income. Their share of income was under the collective management of township enterprises.

Gradual loosening in the state control of prices over grain, wool, fuel in 1984 and 1985 onwards signified a round of alterations in the pattern of government-peasant relationship. Prior to the loosening of control, the state monopolised the purchases and sales of the produces and leakage to market was forbidden. Peasants who relied on these sources for their basic income were thus at the mercy of strict state stipulations. This is a relationship best represented by coercive ritualism.

There have been a series of policy changes since 1985, which marked the beginning of permitted sales in market. Peasants could bargain for a better price in the negotiable sales to the state. Greater autonomy was enjoyed under this policy.

1988 saw reversal of the policies. State control in the purchases of grain, wool and fuel was an effort to manage the problem of food shortages. A withdrawal of the autonomy granted in the peasants' dealing of these produces, coupled by the grain shortages, are important hints

to the temporal distribution of the respective relationship types.

CHAPTER 3 COERCIVE RITUALISM

Coercive ritualism seeks to describe and explain the circumscribed peasant sector under the control of rural government, under that of local cadres, or both. Clientelism unfolded as the local cadres established their own network of clients within.¹ The range of control over peasants differed in the process of decollectivisation, the commencement of household responsibility system and the disorganisation of communes. Several aspects may illuminate varied measures of control but still the pattern of coercive ritualism is discernible.

In this chapter, several conditions associated with coercive ritualism will be laid out, followed by a number of empirical cases. It is the aim of this chapter to elaborate on the intricate dynamics of coercive ritualism, which is distinct from a purely hypothetical totalitarian control on peasants. The dynamics is further complicated by various lossening conditions though essentially constrained by some fundamental impediments.

Before embarking on the discussion of the various conditions associated with coercive ritualism per se, these conditions are to be

1. Clientelism, specifically, has to be differentiated from government control over peasants, which is one of the dimensions of government-peasant relationship. Clientelism precisely alludes to the particularistic relationship, patron-client relation, between two persons or two groups of people. This is difficult to be substantially demonstrated by merely describing the bases of privileges enjoyed by cadres in favour of certain peasants. Consequently, this can only be deduced but not vindicated in this instance. In fact, this is the major shortcoming in Oi's work (1999). On the one hand, she disputes the existence of clientelism; on the other, she fails to display the networks and details of exchanges between peasants and cadres but only the benefits that can be distributed to the peasants. In effect, what is denoted by the more encompassing coercive ritualism can theoretically incorporate the existence of clientelism but not vice versa.

concisely examined first to facilitate an analysis in the two types of government-peasant relationship. The differences among these conditions and their relative importance are the yardstick which differentiates the three types of government-peasant relationship. These conditions are the nature of agricultural policies, the level of agricultural collectivity, the level of commercialisation and some specific local peculiarities.

Since 1978, the main features of agricultural policies, are the extension of years of land leasing¹, the boosting of state (imposed) purchase price over agricultural produce, and the lowering of agricultural taxes². These agricultural policies moderated the tight control over the peasants. The perimeter previously imposed on the peasants was largely loosened.³

It would be necessary to look into the multi-faceted dimensions of

1. Even under the period of decollectivisation, land ownership is assumed to be under the collective but the period of land lease is lengthened up to 15 years for rice fields. In such situation, though the land ownership is nominally under the collective, the actual utilization is fully under the discretion of peasants within this period.

2. There were some exceptional reversals on this overall trend, which could be detected from the imposition of compulsory sales in the times of shortage (1987-88), making the contract between the government and peasants 'pseudo' in nature.

3. A series of interviews by Unger yields results that the decision on the type of household contracting system adopted was made exclusively by officials at levels far above the village. This is based on reports from twenty-eight interviewees, twenty-four of which have pinpointed the above situation. However, this can only suggest one of the aspects of production decision being determined out of the reach of peasants and what have been actually implemented would be another matter. Unger, J. "The Decollectivisation of the Chinese Countryside: A Survey of Twenty-eight Villages" Pacific Affairs 1985-86, no. 4 vol. 55.

agricultural collectivity¹ to yield a meaningful understanding of government-peasant relationship. In this context, they are the concentration of land lease, the level of rural industrialisation and the existence of large development project, probably irrigation and water control project.

First, the concentration of land lease on peasants. This has been substantially altered since the assignment of full responsibility to the household (dabaogan). Previously, the farm land is claimed to be collectively owned by the commune but now the common practice is to divide the land and farm machinery on team or household basis.² There is a great variety of types of land lease, ranging from land occupation with the sole concern of reaping consideration when there is a policy reversal, lease of land on individual basis, lease of land by some

1. The collectivity of agriculture is justified as an essential dimension in accounting for the government-peasant relationship. It has been one of the debatable topics in organising and coordinating agriculture. See Nolan P. The Political Economy of Collective Farms Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1988. A comparative counterpart in the eighteenth century France signifies the importance of using collective enforcement mechanism to collect taxes. "The preservation of communal institutions like *conlidaire* served to strengthen the crown's control over the rural areas. Collective controls were necessary because the king could not afford the costs of directly supervising individual peasants..." see, Root H. L. "State Power and the Persistence of Communal Institutions in Old Regime France" Politics & Society 15, no. 3 (1986-87).

2. Six broad forms of production responsibility system can be identified: 1) specialized contracting with remuneration linked to output (*zhuan ye cheng bao*, *lian chan ji chou*); 2) contracting production for work-groups with remuneration linked to output (*lian chan dao zu*); 3) linking remuneration to output of each labourer, under unified leadership (*tong yi ling dao*, *lian chan dao lao*); 4) fixing output quotas for each household (*bao chan dao hu*); 5) assigning full responsibility to the household (*bao gan dao hu* or *dao gan*); 6) short team contracts for field work (*xiao duan bao gong*). Not all of these derive implications on the level of land concentration. Out of these six forms, the assignment of full responsibility to the households, the most common practice being adopted, permits the lowest level of land concentration. This allows for the household to utilize the land for its own use. (This does not take the subsequent land aggregation by the specialized households into account.) Johnson G. E. "The Production Responsibility System in Chinese Agriculture: Some examples from Guangdong" Pacific Affairs vol. 55 no. 3 fall 1982.

specialised households for crop specialisation, to lease of land by concurrent job household (jianye hu). In short, land is no longer the integral basis on which the local cadre or rural government can exercise control over peasants¹.

Second, the level of rural industrialisation (specifically referring to township and village-owned enterprises). The blossoming of rural enterprises on the one hand has generates tremendous economic impact on by the townships and villages². On the other, the setting of rural enterprises, reflecting the level of rural industrialisation, creates an environment of collectivity that is comparable to that of the previous commune. It is contended that the higher the level of rural industrialisation, the more likely that local government will act in a corporate manner to intervene, extract and redistribute income of peasants³. The following diagram illustrates the increasing importance

1. Traditionally, Chinese peasants were fundamentally reliant on land for their existence, so the control over land tenure and levy (whether in kind or in agricultural tax) by landlord or gentry would indirectly bespeak of control over peasant lives. (It is no exception in other third world countries, see Migdal, J.S. "Capitalist Penetration in the Nineteenth Century: Creating Conditions for New Patterns of Social Control" in Weller, R.P. & Guggenheim, S.E. (ed.) Power and Protest in the Countryside Durham: Duke University Press, 1982.) In the Communist China, the similar control over land tenure and levy together with household registration system established in the commune - a rigid demarcation of rural and urban population generating the effect of geographical fixation of peasants in countryside - provides an effective immobility and control mechanism on peasants.

2. At its early inception, the emergence of rural enterprises stimulate hopes of rescuing rural bankruptcy but their substantial economic contributions vary. The Government has spent about 40 million yuan to help revive bankrupt enterprises in 1988. China News Analysis March 1 1989. However, this is not the main focus of this paper.

3. See Oi, J. "The Fate of the Collective after the Commune" in Davis, D. & Vogel E.F. (ed.) Chinese Society on the Eve of Tiananmen: The Impact of Reform (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1990). Oi attempts to educe the previously well-articulated clientelism in the context of rural industrialisation, the coinage being collective corporatism.

of rural industrialisation, which demonstrates the increasing relative proportion of non-agricultural production in total rural income.

Table.3 Nonagricultural Production as % of Total Rural Income, 1983-87

Year	Industry	Construction	Transport	Commerce & Catering
1983	20.0	7.8	2.0	3.5
1984	23.1	7.4	2.6	3.7
1985	27.6	8.1	3.0	4.2
1986	31.5	7.8	3.3	4.3
1987	34.8	7.7	3.5	4.4

Source: ZGTJNJ 1988

Third, existence of large development project necessitating collective decision making.¹ Development projects, such as irrigation projects and joint-ventures always nourish some kind of need for integrating various decollectivised units to act as a collective entity. The bargain between these entities with outsiders would easily allure governmental intrusion to act on their own behalf and in whatever form of interference it sees fit.

Apart from the nature of agricultural policies, the level of agricultural collectivity, the level of commercialisation - the emergence of urban market and improvement of transport network - does also count in the conditions associated with the three types of

1. A hydraulic society is disputed to be structurally conducive to a strong and total state. See, Wittfogel K.A. Oriental Despotism: a comparative study of total power New York: Vintage Books, 1957.

government-peasant relationship. The emergence of market town (xiaochengzhen or jizhen) accompanied with an urban market, a recent topic attracting numerous debates in the mainland, leads to an overlapping of networks of communication among various resources. Nodal points are able to serve the provision of auxiliary services, market outlets for agricultural product/produce.¹ Improvement in the transport network would inflate business exchanges while reinforcing the overall impact of commercialisation. Last but not least is local peculiarities which would be dealt with specifically in the repective types of government-peasant relationship.

Nature of Agriculture Policies

Despite the general trend of releasing the monopolised purchase and sale of raw materials and essential agricultural products, the abrupt change in the year of 1988 has somewhat reversed the trend. To contain the competition for the raw materials and to combat against the so-called price war, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fishery has stipulated certain materials to be allocated under their directives.² The rural enterprises in Anhui immediately suffer from the extension of control over raw materials.

1. Further details are available in the study of market town. In the past, market towns served as the bastion of the administrative and party machinery and performed as a point to collect grains, oil, cotton, pigs for the state, probably similar to the extension of market and sale cooperatives. Present market towns are mainly found in the secondary and tertiary sectors and are capable of providing labour forces, funds, etc. See "The functions of market town and agricultural modernization" Sociological Studies 1987, no.2.

2. These include rice, silkworm, cotton, wool, cowhide, timber, musk liquorice. Steel and coal also fall into this category. See "Dilemmas & outlets" Jiang Huai Lun Tan 1989 no.2.

Level of Agricultural Collectivity

The dispute going with decollectivisation is that remnants of the collective still retain control over some processes of agricultural production including crop planning, ploughing and planting, irrigation, machine use, pest control and basic land construction¹. Cadres still maintain partially monopolised control over sources of income after decollectivisation as in the provision of agricultural inputs, market and sales opportunities, and salaried job opportunities.² The newly-formed village government, replacing the production team as the lowest level of administration, constitutes another form of collectivity from which the peasants have to seek help. In regard to the agricultural inputs, cadres can maintain control over distribution of rationed and low-priced inputs, chemical fertilizer and motor fuel; access to scarce non-rationed inputs (farm equipment), draft animals and tractors; and allocation of collective resources for contract (chengbao), land, factories and equipment. For the market and sales opportunities, these embrace permission to grow certain types of crop; access to market information and technical expertise; and access to sales contracts (state, collective and private). Recommendations and authorizations for salaried job opportunities, (state factories and collective enterprises

1. In practice, these activities may be directly organized by the collective, by the specialized households who contract with the collective, by obligatory labour from households as part of the contract, or by the households and coordinated with the collective. See Watson, A. "New Structures in the Organisation of Chinese Agriculture: a variable model" Pacific Affairs 1984-85, vol. 57 no. 4

2. Oi J. C. State and Peasant in Contemporary China: The Political Economy of village Government Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.

in urban and rural areas) must be made with the permission from cadres.¹ In brief, the fact that the village government performs as landlords, franchising company, employment agency and allocator of inputs all at once vindicates the peasants' dependence on the state redistributive sector. This is supplemented by a partial market, though the sources of control are diversified in nature.²

The fate of collectives is contended not to be linked with the structural reforms, (that is, the structural dismantlement of collective in favour of village government,) but with the sources of income in a village. The rise of rural enterprises with industrialisation functions as another kind of corporate collective that distributes and squeezes the income of peasants.³ To clarify its definition, "rural enterprises" include various types of ventures, from factories to food stalls, collective or privately owned; but most of the large industrial concerns are owned by the collective (regarded as township enterprises, xiangzhen qiye) and not individuals.⁴ Direct and indirect subsidies would be extracted from township enterprises for the construction of villages.

1. The geographical coverage of the research by Oi J. can be indicated by the origins of those interviewees, who comes from Harbin, Jilin, Beijing, Jinan, Nanjing, Shanghai, Fuzhou, Guangzhou and Kunming. Oi J. (1989) op.cit.

2. Oi J.C. "Market Reforms and Corruption in Rural China" Studies in Comparative Communism vol. XXII no. 2/3 summer/autumn, 1989.

3. It is further postulated that villages which rely primarily on agriculture are most likely to experience the decline of collective, both in fiscal and organisational terms. Oi, J. "The fate of collective after the commune" in Davis D. Vogel E.F. (ed.) 1990, op.cit.

4. The number of these collectively owned enterprises, estimated at 1.5 million, counts on a small portion of the total number of rural enterprises. However, their importance can be illustrated by the amount of income they generate. Xiangzhen qiye contributed 32.3% & 34.9% to the total agricultural income in 1985 and 1986 respectively. ZGTJNJ, 1985.

Highly industrialised and wealthy villages built schools, apartments, and provided free water and electricity.¹ Another policy called "using industry to subsidize agriculture" authorizes local government to take profits from the township enterprises² to assist agriculture. The compulsory 'loans' were imposed on those who were employed in industry.³ This income source, together with some other, would be pooled together for redistribution under the allocation of rural enterprises, like a corporation. Reforms have decentralized agriculture but not industry. Rural enterprises have been realized as a corporate entity to collect and redistribute income for the alleged benefits of the village under the directives of the village government.

It would be noteworthy to inspect the nature and origins of the policy - using industry to subsidize agriculture. It seems that the emergence of rural enterprises, under the trend of industrialisation in rural villages, has recently created and structured the government-peasant relationship. As a result, the peasants in enterprises were positioned in the collectivity to be readily exploited by the village government. It is propounded here that the policy of using industry to

1. A village provides subsidies for education, in one instance, up to 3,000 yuan, in another, 6,000 yuan. A village near Shenyang provides 60 yuan per student, 60 yuan nursery school fee per toddler, 3 yuan per person for health insurance, and 20 yuan per month in old-age pensions for men over 60 and women over 55 years old. 550 jin of rice being would be provided free by the village to each member as the basic grain ration. Oi J. (1990) op.cit.

2. In 1981, commune enterprises were required to contribute 30% of their profits to finance agriculture. Oi J. (1990) ibid.

3. For instance, in parts of Sichuan, peasants who wanted to work in village enterprises paid 500 to 1,000 yuan to the factory. Some find that in Wuxi, workers were required to bring in with them 2,000 to 3,000 yuan. Oi, J. (1990) ibid.

subsidize agriculture is simply to ratify the already existing commune contributions to collective agriculture.¹ Before the onset of the household responsibility system, communes could directly utilize revenues from industry sideline to purchase chemical fertilizer, pesticide, motor fuel, electricity and to construct irrigation works under the camouflage of communes. Therefore, such diversion of funds from industry to agriculture were not easily detected.²

The contributions of industry to agriculture are crystal clear in the implementation of household responsibility system and the consequent independent accounting of fiscal situations of enterprises and agriculture. In the county of Muping, it has been stipulated that differentials between the sale and purchase price of inputs of agriculture production brought by the brigade or team would be underwritten by the rural enterprises. Inputs of agricultural production collectively purchased by the brigade or team would be stated to be sold at a suppressed price to the peasants. It was compulsory for the workers employed in the industrial sideline to work for agricultural irrigation

1. The illustrations are extracted from the county of Muping of Shandong. See "Survey and preliminary analysis on the shifts of land contracting" in Agriculture, Economy and Society vol.3 1985.

2. In most unified collectives, there is a strong collective control over accumulation and distribution of income as a whole. This practice is not solely restricted to rural enterprises. Richer collectives, in general, deriving over 50% of total income come from subsidiaries, may use a variety of devices to transfer income from the non-agricultural to the agricultural sector and to balance income among peasants working in different undertakings. See, Watson, A. "New Structures in the Organisation of Chinese Agriculture: a variable model" Pacific Affairs 1984-85, vol.57, no.4.

works without remuneration.¹ In harvest time, the workers in enterprises were obliged to participate in the transportation and sowing work. Therefore, enterprise workers as individuals and rural enterprise as a collectivity are exposed to the appropriation and distribution of village government.² Rural industrialisation has meaningfully solidified the implementation of the policy - using industry to subsidize agriculture.

At the early inception of household responsibility system before the disorganisation of commune, the communes are encouraged to establish their own enterprises (the predecessor of rural enterprises). The management of commune enterprises was joint-ventures of the party and enterprises. Cadres, in holding privileged positions in enterprises, are prone to abuse their power by expanding their own expenditure limit.³ The appropriation and distribution of surplus in the commune enterprises would be in favour of the collectives of commune and production brigade

1. The method of calculation is as follows: to estimate the availability of fund from the enterprise and the amount of enterprise labour. Under unified supervision of the collective, enterprise labour were directed to the works associated with agriculture. See, "Survey and preliminary analysis on the shifts in land contracting", Agriculture, Economy & Society vol.3 1985.

2. The state extraction of peasants may be disguised in the name of appropriation. Actual extraction may be executed in the name of state but in the interests of cadres. Appropriation for rural construction remains a popular and effective excuse. See, "Reforming village cadre system is the essential content to deepen village reform" in Sociology & Social Research 1990, no.1.

3. See "Discussions on the functions of commune enterprises and industrial, commerce cooperative enterprises" Jiang Hai Xue Kan 1982 no.2.

rather than the individuals¹, who were entangled in a context similar to that of communes.² The establishment of these enterprises, an extension of communes as well as on the set-up of commune would be institutionally conducive to the interference by cadres or government. However, the development of commune enterprises into agricultural, industrial and commercial cooperative enterprises would not immune them from arbitrary influence and extraction. The reason is that the purchases, transport and sales run by the market and sale cooperative and nationalised cooperative is not less than an actual blockage imposed on the enterprises, though indirectly.

Arbitrary cadre interference is common inside the rural enterprises. In Jiangsu, the influence of village cadres is ubiquitous, even though the enterprises are already under specialized contracting (chengbao). The substitution of administrative directives for economic decisions in rural enterprises by village cadres takes the form of time-specific, time-concentrated and indirect influence instead of the former mass scale, daily and routine interference. The ritualistic response of contractors is realised in their short term behaviour without due regard to capital accumulation, investment and long term

1. Despite the various constraints imposed on the peasants, the implication is not that they are unwilling to work under the collectives. Given the fact that levels of collective income and benefits are higher than those that can be generated through private family sidelines or private business, peasants have little incentive to work outside just to raise few chickens and pigs. See Watson, A. "New Structures in the Organisation of Chinese Agriculture: a variable model" Pacific Affairs 1984-85 vol. 57 no.4.

2. See, "Discussions on the functions of commune enterprises and agricultural, industrial and commercial enterprises" Jiang Hai Xue Kan 1982 no.2.

development.¹ Private enterprises are not exempted from haphazard cadre influence. Systematic extraction like taxation (usually aggregating a large amount²) and accidental interference perturbs the private enterprises. Deployment of resources is to the cadres' own benefit. Even worse is their involvement in economic crime and violation of party discipline.³ The location of enterprises in highly commercialised regions does not detract the power and influence of cadres in any considerable extent,⁴ as researches in wealthy regions report. To boost the rural economy, the urban state factories, the commercial departments and the party committee of the county are entitled to impose elaborate bureaucratic control on the countryside, besides on the specific rural

1. This reflects the general situation in Jiangsu since the model of Wuxi rural enterprise was advocated by the provincial level to be applied at the county level. "Synchronization of three models" Jiang Hai Xue Kan 1988 no.5.

2. The description is based on situations in the counties of Cangnan, Pingyang, Ruian, Wenling, Cixi, Fuyang, Tonglu, Deqing, Xinchang, Yuyao, Longquan, Linan, Yuhang, Xiaoshan and Jiande in the province of Zhejiang. It is reported that private enterprises in those counties surrounding Wenzhou Shi have to pay 100,000 yuan each for tax. Some may reach 160,000 yuan. See "The development of Zhejiang village private enterprises" Zhejiang Xue Kan 1988 no.3. The collectivity influence (facilitating cadre interference) induced by industrialisation (flourishing of private enterprises) can yield such an immense impact felt at the micro level that overwhelms the macro impact that the region is being rich (rich region would, in general, experience less cadre influence given well-developed transport and market networks).

3. In the past, the cadres would make use of their positions to acquire benefits in favour of their relatives, like going backdoor. At present, they transform their positional power to direct monetary gains, in some cases, committing illegal acts in the economic realm. Administrative control would be metamorphosed to illegal extraction of monetary gains. See, "Analysis of the illegal acts by party cadres" Jiangxi She Hui Ke Xue 1986 no.5.

4. An illustration in the county of Nanhai in Guangdong suggests that the village head can exercise limited functions as no village enterprise exists in Honglong (village), it is at the xiang level that cadres have been active in creating collective enterprises. See, Thireau, I. "Recent Changes in a Guangdong Village" Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs 19/20, 1988.

enterprises.¹

Although the transformation of villages to township was institutionalized, few material alterations are introduced into the whole collectivity. The township government is far from a hierarchical structure but rather a collectivity susceptible to haphazard influence from a handful of cadres. The transformation of a village into a township government, a supposed impossibility, indicates the irremovability of local rural cadres, which assumed dominance even in the township level.²

The constraints inflicted on the peasants are equally significant. Restrictions imposed on the peasants are not necessarily stipulated explicitly in documents but they were seen in almost every situations. The control was arbitrary, and very often even ambiguous. For instance, the granting of loan was still exercised on team basis at the early years of the responsibility system. Rural cadres, confronted with a bulk of new decision-making responsibility,³ had to seek instructions from several levels above. Consequently, decision-making on rural villages

1. See Siu H. Agents and Victims in South China: Accomplices in Rural Revolution New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989, Chapter 11 The Paradox of Self-reliance. Vogel E. F. One Step Ahead in China: Guangdong under reform London: Harvard University Press, 1989, Chapter 3 A Decade of Reforms.

2. This is found in the area of Longli county of Guizhou. See "A preliminary study on the market town in the county of Longli" Guizhou She Hui Ke Xue 1986 no.10.

3. For instance, in what circumstances the loans can be granted out, whether the loans can be granted to those marketing illegal goods, how to resolve the conflicts when the terms of loans different from those listed out by local party cadres, what the respective clients of credit cooperative and bank are, etc. See "The target client of granting loan should be individual households" Guizhou She Hui Ke Xue 1991 no.2.

would be time-consuming and restrained especially in regard to those relevant to peasants.

Level of Commercialisation

The most visible fund application of the rural enterprises is the compulsory appropriation of enterprise surplus to the rural government.¹ Cadre interference in rural enterprises is attributable to the impossibility of fixing a realisable contract quota otherwise practicable in a market economy. The market fails to provide essential information, such as fluctuations in product prices during the contract term, prices of raw materials, fuels and market outlets for the final product.² Therefore, even rural enterprises in the most wealthy and most accessible region may be subject to various hindrances from the cadres who assume the responsibility for export trade (Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations and Trade). It is lamented that the rural enterprises in Guangdong, generating the highest export earnings in average, has to export the products with the permission and registration from the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations and Trade. Paradoxically,

1. The portion of surplus to be paid to the district, county and village by rural enterprises amount to a considerable sum. The rule is that rural enterprises have to pay at most 40% of their profits to the rural government but the actual proportion may amount to 50-60% in average. Apart from the large piece of profit to be paid to the rural government, some other regulations may further limit their exercise of autonomy. The short contract term for rural enterprises may preclude many long term constructive decisions for the enterprises. The quantity produced is the major criterion for determining the performance of the enterprises, at the expense of other qualitative consideration. The self-imposed limitations loomed large in township enterprises as cadres in the enterprises would take more factors into account, e.g. the possible shifts of existing policy, the political line of the township enterprises. See "The problems of agricultural collective enterprises" in Guangdong She Hui Ke Xue 1987 no.1.

2. See "Synchronization of three models" Jiang Hai Xue Kan 1988 no.5.

export-oriented rural enterprises are greatly impeded by the cadres.¹

The development of urban market and market town accumulates benefits in economic transaction and therefore it is easier for agricultural by-products to access the nodal point for purchases and sales. The purchasing of farm machinery is done through the networks in market town. On the contrary, relatively undeveloped market town is vulnerable to the extension of departmentalism. Different regulations are implemented by different departments, resulting in mismanagement.² Consequently, market towns are ineffective organisations in the provision of necessary services and products, e.g. housing, sanitation, transport safety etc. Against this background, the lowly commercialised market towns do not function fully in speeding up the flow of resources and products.

To illustrate with specific incidents, the relatively undeveloped and thin market for grain and some other cash crops is a source of pressure to peasants whereby they are bound to conform with the intent of the political authorities. Though the radical baogan daohu facilitates the release of labour from agriculture, the new system still implies certain administrative controls over acreages and assignment of grain, cotton sales contracts. This is indeed the major constraints in

1. See "The details of the export-oriented rural enterprises" Guangdong She Hui Ke Xue 1988 no.3. "CCP strengthens her party branch control over foreign enterprise" Ming Pao 13 June 1991.

2. There are such cases in Guiding of Guizhou, see "Agricultural development in hilly area" Guizhou She Hui Ke Xue 1983, no.6.

areas stipulated by the state to specialise in grain and cotton.¹

There are further cases of interference of local cadres in their personal interests. In the hope of increasing revenue both for the region and for their own, extra custom houses are installed to generate more revenue from passage levy. The market and supply cooperatives are organised under the control of village government, whose interests are realised with the help of cooperatives at the expense of the peasants.² In short, even a medium level of commercialisation, while generating additional revenue for the region, may induce interference from local cadres to squeeze out the added revenue by administrative measures.

Extraction may also take the form of departmentalism,³ where the interests of departments reign over others. Rural enterprises have to count on the support of numerous departments for raw materials and sales outlets.⁴

The discordant development between the existing provisions of services for market outlet, processing, storage, transport, technology,

1. The description is based on the case in Dahe Township located in the southwestern part of Hebei province, see Putterman, L. "Entering the Post-Collective Era in North China: Dahe Township" Modern China vol. 15 no. 3 July 1989.

2. This refers to the county of Zunyi in Guizhou, see "To grasp economic reform and to promote structural adjustment" Guizhou She Hui Ke Xue 1985 no. 6.

3. For a detail analysis on departmentalism in the context of bureaucratic policy making, see Lieberthal K. & Oksenberg M., Policy Making in China: Leaders, Structures, and Processes, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.

4. The county of Zunyi, in spite of recent development of few transport networks, cannot escape the control of departments, see "To grasp economic reform and to promote structural adjustment" Guizhou She Hui Ke Xue 1985, no. 6.

information, loan and what is demanded by the specialised households engender the necessity of support from local cadres.¹ However, the rural cadres, being jealous of the well-off specialised households, adopt uncooperative attitude to the nouveau riche. Various restrictions were imposed on the purchase of means of production and the drawing of contracts, e.g. the supply of forage, anti-pestilence.

Apart from imposing restrictions, local cadres also attempt to squeeze the monetary surplus from peasants.² Various items are instituted with a view to tax the peasants such as agricultural tax, purchased grain, treasury coupon, education surcharge, tax on special products, irrigation surcharge, surcharges for militia training, expenses for veterans, compensations for cadres, etc. Distributions from rural government are minimal and inadequate to fulfill the peasants' needs.³

Local Peculiarities

Rural enterprises historically vulnerable to cadres' discretion (this case refers to Sunan) are not necessarily impeded in its economic

1. The uncooperative attitude adopted by rural cadres towards the recently emerged specialised households can be located in the county of Changfeng in Anhui. See "The functions of professional households" Jiang Huai Lun Tan 1983 no. 4.

2. A brief comment made by the cadres points out that the above (rural government) extracts much from villages but feed back little to them. First, cadres would demand for grain (state procurement). Second, they would expect money (tax). Third, they would take away the lives of peasants (babies who may have been given birth). The findings are acquired from the counties of Nanping, Longyan, Quanzhou and Putian in Fujian. See "New developments of village society and the discordant elements" Sociological studies 1990, no. 1.

3. One catty of pesticide is allocated for each peasant a year. Impurities and underweighting are very common, *ibid.*

success as some may presume. On the contrary, it is equally possible that *strict capital fund apportioning under the discretion of former collectives can facilitate economic well-being in spite of governmental influence in the economic arena, given a previously well-established collective industrial infra-structure and a close proximity to market hinterland* (Shanghai). Circumstances of Sunan (including the regions of Suzhou, Wuxi and Changzhou), would exemplify certain historical specificities of coercive ritualism.¹

Sunan has been an industrial base since the 50's. In 1985, the value of industrial and agricultural products accounted for 90.8% of the 288 billion yuan, the total value of productivity in rural village. Significant transfer of fund is witnessed from the industry to agriculture, the so-called policy of using industry to subsidize agriculture. However, at the early stage of industrial development, contributions were made from collective agriculture to sponsor industry (it is estimated that 5 billion yuan was transferred from collective agriculture to industry during the developments of township enterprises)². Apparently, the industrial and agricultural sectors are

1. It is noteworthy to pinpoint the fact that the model of Sunan is primarily a case of coercive ritualism, which signifies an enormous collective involvement in both agriculture and industry. However, it is also a slightly deviant case of coercive ritualism in that the collective engagement in economic activities in Sunan is more a matter of construction to the local rural community than of usurpation. Similar empirical case as Sunan is quite rarely identified elsewhere. Therefore, it is being advocated as a model to other villages. The essence of its development is summarised in italics above.

2. Other sources include the funds accumulated from the enterprises themselves and contributions brought forward from the enterprises workers. See "A compared study between the model of Sunan and Wenzhou" Quarterly Journal of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences 1987 no.3

historically within easy reach of the government to appropriate, distribute and extract.¹

Besides the fund allocation under collective decision, both flow of labour and source of information are also under the control of village administration. More importantly, information of various types is normally conveyed hierarchically in enterprises or acquired through informal networks². To regulate township enterprises, at least three ways can be identified. First, direct intervention can be accomplished via village organisations. Second, industry, commerce, taxation revenue departments may exercise less direct regulation on the enterprises. The most remote way of control may resort to state economic plan. In short, the coercive ritualism has embedded in a context of historically well-structured industrial collective, it is a step forward in the direction of rural resuscitation.

1. The following diagram may help illustrate the village government can administratively control both agriculture and industry,

Agricultural land use & construction	-	-(a)-	
Agricultural provident fund	-	village	-(b)- township
Agricultural labour force	-	government*	-(c)- enterprises
Agricultural loan	-	-(d)-	

*Village government here subsumes industry corporation, agricultural corporation, agricultural bank, credit union, village administration.

- (a) the original source of land premises for the enterprise
 - (b) the original source of fixed accumulation for the enterprise
 - (c) the labour source for the enterprise
 - (d) the original source of mobile capital for the enterprise
- (extracted from "A compared study of the Sunan and Wenzhou model")

2. This is regarded as the 'five friends', namely, village fellows, relatives, comrades, schoolmates and friends.

Concluding remarks

Coercive ritualism, encompasses what the orthodoxical totalitarian model attempts to depict. That is, in a restricted peasant society, almost all significant aspects of life are being placed under state supervision and monitored by agents of state, the rural cadres. The control is coercive in nature for the commanding mechanism is embedded in the state structure long fabricated heretofore. Paradoxically, coercive ritualism revives in the wake of agricultural decollectivisation.

This can happen provided the context for coercive ritualism crystallizes, as characterised by a low level of commercialisation, a high level of agricultural collectivity and a befitting policy aura. It is under these favourable circumstances that cadres can extend their guanxi to act as a client to the peasants by both legal and illegal acts. These three conditions are regarded as the essential conditions that associate with the incidence of coercive ritualism. An integrated state predominance over economic realms is normally not conducive to progress, both in the agricultural and industrial sectors. Usurpation, extraction, or at the best of situation, socio-economic disparity balancing, in lieu of progress, are the anticipated consequences resulting from coercive ritualism. That means, the state have the ability to govern but not to reform and construct. Order mediating between the government and peasants is channelled through governing, rather than betterment. Given a historically embedded industrial infrastructure, it would be possible for governmental monitoring to be

effected to generate constructive contributions to the peasant economy.

CHAPTER 4 DISINTEGRATED AUTONOMY

In this chapter, the main ingredients of disintegrated autonomy will be sketched. Then a detailed description of the conditions associated with this type of government-peasant relationship will be delivered. Disintegrated autonomy endeavours to denote the situation in which the tri-actors - the rural government, the middlemen and the peasants - are in a state of disintegration so that none can dominate over the other two. Nor can any two of them form an alliance against the other one since each of them is preoccupied with concern of their survival - the only kind of autonomy that they can enjoy - autonomy of survival. Poor areas have a high correlation with disintegrated autonomy, though the relationship is not a necessary one.¹ The conditions associating with the disintegrated autonomy will be interpreted as followings.

Nature of Agricultural Policies

In studying policies pertinent to disintegrated autonomy, one must bear in mind that the widespread adoption of household responsibility system would not necessarily dismantle the commune, production brigade and production team completely. What it does is it would disarray the organisation structure of villages. Collectivities have not been totally supplanted by the kind of agricultural production founded basically on

1. Coercive ritualism and reactionary subsistence have been discussed and accounted for by scholars but not disintegrated autonomy. The plausible reason may be that the rather low accessibility of this pattern of relationship diminishes its transparency to empirical researchers.

individual basis. Indeed such supplantation has been trapped in between the two modes of agricultural organisations where chaotic episodes emerge.¹

The adoption of the contracting system and the market in the place of monopolized purchase to collect agricultural products (though not a comprehensive replacement as some still remain in the list of monopolized purchase) began the minimal-mutual-interaction relationship between peasants and the rural government. Greater autonomy are then enjoyed by the peasants.²

Level of Agricultural Collectivity

In Hebei³, after the abolition of the commune structure, collective agriculture has arrived at a stage where houses, property, tools of production and farm machinery previously owned by the collective are appropriated for re-distribution among the peasants. In this sense, the solidarity and centripetal force of the collective are

1. The case of Pingshan county in Hebei and its detail would be dealt with in the section of the level of societal collectivities in this chapter. See "To develop a new economic agricultural management structure" Hebei Yue Kan 1994, no. 4.

2. See "Agricultural economic reform" Jianguo Huai Lun Tan 1993 no. 3.

3. This is a county of Pingshan. See "To develop a new economic agricultural management structure" Hebei Yue Kan 1994 no. 1.

diminished¹. Instead of performing the function of a focus of service provision, the village collective² is now solely responsible for the collection of grains from the peasants. The peasants encounter difficulties in irrigation³, acquiring inputs of agricultural production, seeking outlets for agricultural products, which would otherwise have been rendered by the former collective.⁴ The management of rural finance is not treated in due procedures (no accountants, nor book-keepers are employed), such that abuse of funds is the consequence. The entire rural governing hierarchy is at the verge of bankruptcy, whereby the establishment of rural cadres is left vacuum and that the

1. Although in decollectivisation the land is still graded, how to match the graded land with the expected output quota is not determined by the cadres. Therefore, contracting of farmland is not corresponded with production quota. Besides, the reserves for the collective is not well maintained and so is the remuneration of cadres. The management of farmland is largely flawed as no record is made on the transfer of farmland and no one pays heed to the amount of abandoned land. (Qinan in the province of Gansu) See "To perfect the development of agricultural productivity" Science, Economy, Society 1989, no.2.

2. Despite the fact that the 'collective' here cannot connote the meaning of collectivity, the word 'collective' is still adopted here since it is customarily used in the context of China. For the sake of simplicity, this is used to describe the general rural organisation structure in lieu of constructing a new term for the prevailing structure.

3. In the county of Yanjing in Henan province, in times of drought (after decollectivisation), the contracted households have to queue after wells for water. Excessive pumping of water from the well sped up the drying of the wells. Electricity lines have been connected with a number of motors by households, resulting in interruption of the electricity supply and fire. In 1981, there were 30 motors in the brigade, maintenance fees amounted to 2,000 yuan. See "Unified management and contracting to households in Xiaotan commune" Social Sciences in China 1982 no.8.

4. The county of Yutian in Hebei province offers a succinct example. In the years of collective operation, a number of tasks have to be organised and coordinated by the collective: well digging (10,000 yuan estimated for the task, which is unaffordable to the individual households), machinery for the operation of wells, irrigation facilities and maintenance, drainage (preventing silting), machinery farming (tractors), husking, grain purchasing and conservation (combating against pest, storage of pesticide, sprinkling). See "Two levels of management for the household responsibility system" Social Sciences in China 1989 no.1.

government fails to guarantee for their emolument. Since policies do not give any assurance to the livelihood of rural cadres, the whole rural government appears impotent in implementing the contracting out of farm land, the developing of agricultural resources as well as the organising of unions among the industrial, commercial and agricultural sectors. As a corollary, policy execution against deforestation¹, firing, unstipulated birth and gambling is ineffective. With the generally undeveloped rural enterprises, difficulty anticipated in forming economic unions would make integration, horizontal or vertical, almost impossible.

It is still possible for the peasants to rely on agriculture after decollectivisation.² Rural cadres are not bold enough to implement the policies to give incentives to the peasants. Neither effective control over production decisions nor vigorous backing on the development of agriculture and subsidiaries are expected from the cadres. The peasants are left with free hands to resolve the issues of production, finding market outlet, transporting products to other parts of the mainland.³

What is happening in the rural governance would further exemplify

1. In the county of Yutian, forests and orchards of the collective have been cut down by individual households for their own sales. For instance, a number of 220,000 trees had been pulled down to leave behind 5000. See "Two levels of management for the household responsibility system" (1989), *ibid.*

2. In the counties of Wugu, Zhidan and Luochuan in the province of Shanxi, there is still above 70% peasants bonded with farmland. The value of grain products accounts for 75% of the total agricultural product. See "To discuss the ways that can improve the Yanan region" SCIENCE, ECONOMY, SOCIETY 1985 no.3.

3. *ibid.*

how the rural community is being disintegrated.¹ Cadres disclosed that increasing difficulties are encountered in accumulating funds for agricultural infra-structure. On the one hand, large scale investments would require such a large amount of capital financing that the peasants would not be willing to support the project individually, whose benefits would be capitalised on a considerable number of peasants. On the other, even with collective efforts to alleviate the difficulties, these may impinge unbearable burdens on the generally poor peasants, who are the ones to shoulder the excessive expenses.² Moreover, the duties of cadres have not been executed properly.³ The rural agriculture is in a state -----

1. Disintegrated autonomy theoretically precludes the possibility of collective action for the common interests. Therefore, it may logically follow that a coercive institution such as the government is necessary for collective actions, or large projects. This kind of argument can be found in Olson, M. The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965. The main argument of this book is that if the members of a large group rationally seek to maximize their personal welfare, they will not act to advance their common or group objectives unless there is coercion to force them to do so. However, it is propounded here that a coercive institution is not a requisite for collective actions for the common interests. That means, theoretically speaking, the implications of either disintegrated autonomy or reactionary subsistence can embrace the possibility of voluntaristic collective action without coercion. A theoretical demarcation of coercive ritualism from disintegrated autonomy and reactionary subsistence is thus possible. For this argument, see Hardin R. "The Social Evolution of Cooperation" in Cook K. S. & Levi M. (ed.) The Limits of Rationality Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990.

2. This can be reflected by the amount of expenditure on agricultural investment. In the county of Chuxian in Anhui, before the responsibility system, the peasants' expenditure is mainly on consumption. However, the ratio of expenditure on consumption to expenditure on production has changed to 3:7. Of the 70% expenditure on production, 6/10 is for investment in fixed capital and raw materials for subsidiaries. See "The problems for the village development" Social Science in China 1992, no. 3.

3. These may include the provision of services for agriculture, the acquisition of inputs of production (collective purchasing of chemical fertilizer, pesticide), the assistance during agricultural processing and after harvesting, the guidance to prevent plague, unified instruction on irrigation arrangements. It is not unusual for them to experience inadequacies in chemical fertilizer, pesticide, fuel, farm machinery in rural areas. Even the peasants may get them through the open access to markets, the prices are prohibitively high. Probably, the major problem for the cadres is their negligence in drawing, implementing and enforcing the contracts, which are always violated later. See "Transfer of farmland with compensation is

of diminishing investment¹ to which cadres pay no efforts in regulating². In a few areas, the decollectivisation of agriculture is not proceeding with the energizing momentum found elsewhere, that is, the concurrent transformation of economic activities, or the emergence of specialised households and the proliferation of rural enterprises.³

The fragmented land lease⁴ yields small and scattered farm lands. The scale of agricultural production is thus inhibited to the extent that the responsibility of irrigation, construction of drainage, farming by machinery, soil conservation becomes an impossibility to the individual households.⁵ Therefore very often the basic agricultural

...Continued...

the new path of development" Jiangxi She Hui Ke Xue 1988 no.2.

1. Some mainland authors may attribute the diminishing investment in agriculture to the non-compensatory transfer of farmland. However, this argument may mislead the readers. It is because the value of farmland is so low that people abandon the farmland or transfer it to others without compensation. The transfer of farmland is an indicator of the diminishing investment in agriculture but not the cause as deemed by the Mainland authors.
2. The county of Nanchang in the province of Jiangxi may be one of the examples. See "The problems of deepening agricultural reform" Jiangxi She Hui Ke Xue 1988 no.1.
3. The lack of a concurrent transformation of economic activities leads to a restricted development of markets both in the provision of information and loans, the essential elements of commercialisation. See "The reasons for the diminishing agricultural investment" Jiangxi She Hui Ke Xue 1988 no.1. Other expositions may indicate the absence of outlets for the agricultural subsidiaries and unavailability of further processing. This is typical in the county of Lingtao in Gansu, where there is agricultural labour redundancy. See "Glut in agricultural labour force" She Hui Ke Xue (Gansu) 1983, no.2.
4. In the county of Chao Xian in Anhui, some farmland is abandoned, 50,000 acres in the district of Chao Hu. See "Agricultural economic reform" Jiang Huai Lun Tan 1985 no.5.
5. This can be illustrated by example of the county of Yutian in Hebei. See "To develop rural cooperative economic organisations" Hebei Xue Kan 1989, no.2.

infrastructure is left idle. Furthermore, few can afford to invest in the purchase of such large machinery. Given the collective nature of investment in agricultural infrastructure, very few would have the initiative in investing. Consequently, agricultural conservation and construction are largely abandoned.

A specific focus on cadres may enhance the understanding of the predicament in rural governance. In disintegrated autonomy, the team of rural cadres have experienced adaptative obstacles¹ in response to the new problems generated by the responsibility system. Feeling constrained and impotent in face of the new environment, coupled with excessive workloads, few new comers are interested in taking up the post. What remain in the rural government² are a number of old and not well-qualified cadres³.

1. In a survey conducted in the counties of Dingyuan, Fengyang, Quanjiao and Jiashan in the province of Anhui, of 68 party committee members (in 9 communes) and 208 branch committee members (in 41 production brigades), about 18% are not qualified and 12% not familiar with the duties. See "The problems of the village development" Social Sciences in China 1982 no.3.

2. Both disintegrated autonomy and reactionary subsistence may experience similar syndrome, that is, the incapability of rural government to execute daily duties. But the underlying factors for the similar phenomenon is entirely different. In disintegrated autonomy, it is the disgusting working environment and the excessive and demanding duties that discourage new cadres to join the hierarchy. In reactionary subsistence, the main reason for the paralysis of the rural government is drawing of the local cadres by the attractions generated by commercialisation. This can be verified by the fact that the former one is usually identified with poor areas while the latter is likely to be associated with wealthy regions.

3. In the above survey (5052 communes and production brigades, team cadres), it is revealed that 9.5% are illiterate, 50% have primary education, 7% have high school education, 27.3% are those of 15 or above, 32.9% have experienced land reform. It can be concluded that the grass root cadres are rather low-educated and aged. See "The problems of village development" Social Sciences in China 1982 no.1.

Level of Commercialisation

In a production brigade in Guizhou after assigning full responsibility to the household (baogan daohu), the number of those engaging in diversified mode of agricultural production and processing is still limited (only fifty-two households take part in such diversified form of production in a production brigade, that is, 11.8% of total labour force).¹ The explanation reported is the difficulty in finding market outlets for products of diversified agriculture. In fact, the rural cadres in this area are not active in participating in meetings in which economic and administrative messages are conveyed from the authorities above. Neither a strict control from the local authorities nor enthusiastic assistance² can be expected in the rural administration and organisation.

In other instances in Guizhou, the supply and marketing cooperatives can only purchase one-fourth of the peaches produced in the county.³ The peasants, in order to ensure the sales of peach, have to

1. This refers to the gaolian production brigade in Tianzhu county of Guizhou since the introduction of household responsibility system but before the dismantlement of commune. See "To deepen and widen the diversified economic activities in hilly region" Guizhou She Hui Ke Xue no. 2 1993.

2. At the early period of household responsibility system, some households cannot manage to seize the profitable situation and get rich for the fear of the cadres' jealousy towards their appreciable economic performance. Considering the possibility of shifts in agricultural policy, cadres would prefer to stand aloof from the everyday agricultural production. They would not be committed to the support to the peasants. See "A survey on two kinds of households in Guizhou" Guizhou She Hui Ke Xue 1994 no. 3.

3. The county has produced twelve million catties of peaches but the cooperatives have purchased merely three million catties. See "To develop agricultural individual households" Guizhou She Hui Ke Xue no. 5 1993.

lower the price. The paucity of provision of daily necessary services and products for the peasants by the supply and marketing cooperatives is a characteristic feature in Guizhou.¹ Several factors can account for the difficulties in the sales and purchases. First, the tendency for the monopolised supply and marketing cooperatives to place especial emphasis on those large sales makes them neglectful of small sales of other agricultural produce.² Consequently, the outlets for neglected produce are underdeveloped. Second, commercial network outlets are found to be inadequate to meet the diversified and rapidly increasing agricultural produce.³ Third, the poor transport in the region accentuates the difficulty in economic transactions.⁴ The interference and support from cadres is minimal on the occasion.

1. This includes the counties of Kaiyang, Puding, Wengan and Anshun. See "To develop agricultural individual households" Guizhou She Hui Ke Xue no.5 1983.

2. The Wengan county, in order to concentrate on the purchase of tobacco, has sacrificed other products. In 1980, the purchased agricultural by-products amounted to 9,560,000 yuan but the portion excluding tobacco only accounted for 2,440,000 yuan (25%). In 1981, the value of purchased agricultural by-products is estimated at 16,230,000 yuan but only 1,136,000 yuan (7%) of agricultural products were non-tobacco. In 1982, the percentage of other by-products is even lower, about 5%. See "To develop agricultural individual households" Guizhou She Hui Ke Xue no.5 1983.

3. There were 25,021 production brigades and 222,260 production teams in Guizhou. But the total commercial network outlets run by the supply and marketing cooperative amounted to only 19,187, that is, one production brigade could be entertained by less than one commercial network outlet. See "To develop agricultural individual households" Guizhou She Hui Ke Xue no.5 1983.

4. The province of Guizhou is 97% hilly. It is estimated that about 700 communes that are not connected by roadways. Animals are still widely employed as the mode of transport in hilly areas. See "To develop agricultural individual households" Guizhou She Hui Ke Xue no.5 1983. The poor region of Ningxia is also constrained by poor transport, through which goods are difficult to be transported in and out of the region. "Village and economic development in the poor region" Ningxia She Hui Ke Xue 1986. no.5.

In the county of Yutian,¹ demand for agricultural services is high. There are needs for inputs of agricultural production², technology transfer, information, produce processing, loans, transport, storage and sales. Meanwhile, the recently reformed village cooperative (the previously village group) has yet to accomplish the task, let alone the formation of some voluntary specialized economic cooperatives in more developed areas. In this case, the rural government, the middlemen and the peasants are by and large dissociated from one another.

Similar situation can be found in Henan.³ Since the disorganisation of the collective, its property was rapidly appropriated by the peasants. And the entire village was in a state of organisational anarchy,⁴ (particularly in poor regions) which can be attributed to the

1. Hebei Xue Kan, 1989 no.2 op.cit.

2. In this paper, this generally refers to chemical fertilizer, tractor, combine harvester, agricultural medicine.

3. This is in the county of Huangchuan of Henan. See "Weakening of village political organisation" Sociology & Social Research 1990 no.4.

4. This is reflected by the decreasing number of rural party cadres in the region. In 1994, there were 10,693 party cadres but 10,539 in 1988. From 1981 to 1988, the average annual increase of party cadres is about 75 in the county, that is, among the 267 administrative villages in the county, the average annual increase of party cadres is less than one for three administrative villages. Furthermore, the aged population of cadres reveals that the young are not willing to join the hierarchy. In 1999, there were 10,539 peasants holding party membership, those below 30 accounting for 11.5%, those above 36 amounting to 46.7%, those above 56 to 22.9%. "Weakening of village political organisations" Sociology & Social Research no.1 1990.

scarcity of rural enterprises.¹ It is believed that by constructing rural collective enterprises and concentrating enterprises organisation, redundant labour force could be absorbed and diverted to rural accumulation and investment, yielding sufficient funds for rural reconstruction. The poor regions², usually surrounded by hilly relief, experience difficulties in transportation, especially in gaining access to chemical fertilizer, pesticide, herbicides, fuels, markets and loans.³ This kind of region, might have a relatively large primary sector, such as Jingyuan in Ningxia.⁴

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1. The number of collective enterprises is rather low, as compared to the proportion of individual enterprises. In 1984, there were 229 village enterprises, employing 8740 people and generating 14,638,000 yuan value of product. In the same year, individual agricultural products yielded 193,890,000 yuan value of product and individual enterprises contributed 5,289,000 yuan. The proportion of collective enterprises to individual enterprises is 1:13.6. In 1985, the proportion is 1:11.3. Until 1988, there are still 123 villages without any collective enterprises out of the total of 267, i.e. 46.1% villages are without collective enterprises, "Weakening of village political organisations" Sociology & Social Survey no.4 1990. Similar situation can be identified in the county of Lingtao in Gansu. See "To develop township enterprises" Science, Economy, Society 1986 no.4.
 2. Besides Henan, the counties of Zuoyun, Youyu, Pinglu in Shanxi similarly have poor transport, inactive purchase of agricultural products by the market and sale cooperatives. "Problems pertinent to the economic development in the poor region" Jiangxi She Hui Ke Xue 1988 no.5.
 3. There is one interesting consequence which is revealed in the study of the county of Huangchuan, which shares similar characteristics in the later stage of reactionary subsistence. The local anarchic and paralysed rural administrative machinery indirectly calls for the intrusion of the central state to maintain rural social order, possibly in the form of regulative device such as law. This is in fact the situation in rural China. However, the inadvertent state intrusion in rural society may not necessarily result in the desired outcome. The reason is that socialist state law in China is still not capable of demarcating the respective interests of the peasants and the state. See McCormick B. Political Reform in Post-Mao China Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
 4. In the county of Jingyuan in Ningxia, the proportion of people employed in the primary sector is about 90.6% while the secondary and tertiary accounts for 1.9% & 7.6% respectively in 1985. The national average is 73.72%, 15.96% and 10.32% respectively. See "The economic thought of poverty" Ningxia She Hui Ke Xue 1999 no.1.

Difficulty in gaining access to market outlets in other provinces has restricted the boundary of market hinterland. Anticipating minimal help from rural cadres, the rural enterprises respond by confining their markets to the surrounding areas in consideration of the poor transport network.¹ The scope of market outlets is thus minimised, so is the dependence on rural cadres. To cope with the inefficiency of market and sale cooperatives, the common strategy is self-containment. Some poor areas², albeit located in rich provinces, still find their development restricted by the lack of food processing industry, cooperative of agricultural-industrial-commerce, sale and market outlets, and employment opportunities. Another strategy is to have a nearby plant for further processing to reduce the need for transport.³

1. In 1987, when the 440 rural enterprises in the county of Fuyang in Anhui, were asked which the most annoying problem for the enterprises was, the answer was the absence of market outlets for the sale of product. In response to this, 72.6% rural enterprises tried to limit the market area in local villages. It logically follows that their reliance on rural cadres for market outlets was very low. "Dilemmas and outlets" Jiang Huai Lun Tan 1989, no.2. Similar strategy can be identified in the peasants of Jiangsu. Rural enterprises deliberately develop their reliance on more accessible and reliable raw materials, technology and markets. For instance, rural enterprises in Jiangsu employ both agricultural by-products and local industrial by-products as the inputs of enterprises. Lime, stone, tile are the common products of rural enterprises which may find their market outlets easily at their disposal. See "To establish at villages" in Jiang Hai Xue Kan 1984 no.5.

2. The county of Dingyuan in Anhui is traditionally a very poor area. Its relatively undeveloped agricultural husbandry and industrial processing has localised its rural development and segregated the area from other regions. "To have a strategic view point on the development of animal husbandry" Jiang Huai Lun Tan 1983 no.4. Another very poor county, Dingxi, is also a typical poor area. See, "The property structure of the Gansu area" Science, Economy, Society 1986 no.4. In general, the province of Gansu has been characterised by the weakened county government incapable of monitoring integrated development of the region, poor structure for capital financing and inadequacy of market town. This engenders the proper features of the disintegrated autonomy in which the peasants strive hard for survival. See, "To discuss the development of agricultural strategy in Gansu" Science, Economy, Society 1986 no.1.

3. In general, this kind of strategies is common to avoid cadre dominance. See "The problems of contracting households in Guiyang" Guizhou She Hui Ke Xue 1992 no.1.

Market and sale cooperatives, in general, perform the role of purchasing and sale functionaries. The market and sale cooperatives would experience decline in terms of its functions and numbers when the traditional cooperatives were not prepared to initiate organisational reforms.¹ For instance, with the rapid development in agriculture, animal husbandry and industry in some former poor regions (e.g. the autonomous regions), the market and sale cooperatives still restrict their role in the purchasing of inputs of production and the sale of agricultural produce and products. The cooperatives see no incentive in expanding the realm of services, whether in agricultural processing, provision of transport services and storages. So they continue to offer merely supplementary assistance to the peasants specialising in producing wool, poultry, or dried fruit. Wholesale service for industrial products falls out of the attention of the cooperatives in regions which previously deal mainly with agriculture.

Local Peculiarities

The linkage between the rural government and the peasants in autonomous regions is historically mediated by leaders of the national minority. Cadres of national minority are supposed to be the ones to articulate official policies and to adapt them to the local context. However, in regard to their size and their technology level, it is

1. In the self-autonomous region of Xinjiang, of the total 595 market and sale cooperatives, 2/3 had withered away. 42 of them had been on the brink of bankruptcy, leaving a great deficit behind. See "Making good for the market and sale cooperatives in the autonomous region" Xinjiang She Hui Ke Xue 1986, no. 2.

doubtful whether they can function effectively in integrating the interests of the local minority and that of the state. Their evident deficiencies in performing the duties widen and deepen the segregation between the rural government and the national minority. Because of such deficiencies, the policy intent from the central level is rarely given due attention in the region of national minority. One such case is the developing of rural enterprises.¹

Cadres of national minority in Ningxia are insufficient in terms of number to fulfill the developmental needs in the region.² For instance, technological development is sluggish.³ As a matter of fact, a large number of national minority cadres is vital in transforming the less developed areas to a more developed one. Cadres of national minority find it difficult to implement policies, let alone rural development and construction.⁴

1. See "Ningxia national minority cadre" Ningxia She Hui Ke Xue 1988, no. 3.

2. The proportion of cadres of national minority in 1958 and 1986 is 15.75% and 15.27% respectively. From 1976 to 1986, the proportion of cadres of national minority only experiences 1% increase every 5 years. Moreover, in 1986 the minority - Hui - occupies 32.36% in the region but the Hui cadres only amounts to 14.23%. "Ningxia national minority cadre" Ningxia She Hui Ke Xue 1988, no. 3.

3. In 1986, in the whole autonomous region, there are 75488 technical cadres of various kind, of which there are 10132 national minorities, i.e. 13.42%. This figure (10132) amounts to 0.71% of Huizu, which is proportionally smaller than that of the rest of nationalities. "Ningxia national minority cadre" Ningxia She Hui Ke Xue 1989, no. 3.

4. Given the minimal assistance from cadres, the development of rural enterprises in this poor region is still immature. Despite the inception of rural enterprises, in one of the poorest regions in Ningxia, Guyuan, the number of rural enterprises in the whole region is not comparable to that of a small county in the provincial capital of Ningxia, Yinchuan. See "Discussions on the villages in national minority region" Ningxia She Hui Ke Xue 1989, no. 5.

Concluding remarks

Disintegrated autonomy provides a sketch of loosened connection between the rural government and the peasants. The weakened mediating role of state agents is attributable to some peculiarities aforementioned. This is further consolidated by the compelled self-sustenance of peasants. Encapsulated in a setting of a low level of commercialisation and a low level of agricultural collectivity, and provided with limited support from the cadres, the peasants have to rely on themselves for survival. The cadres thus find it unattractive to serve as the peasants' clients, and they start to vacate from the local government.¹ The central state is directly and inadvertently permeating into the life of the peasants in the form of state law, which constitutes the backbone of the local order. (The local order of rural villages was customarily maintained under the auspices of local leaders, especially in self-autonomous areas.) The decadence of the rural administration inevitably evokes a direct state-peasant encounter, where disputes and conflicts in the locality are resolved. The rural social order is thus maintained in a seesaw situation by the formalistic

1. Developments in Ghana and Guinea indicate that in order to elude from the impact of state deterioration, various attempts, collectively named as disengagement from the state, would be adopted by the citizens. They are the efforts to adjust to an environment of diminishing opportunities and increasing vulnerability. These include suffer-manage, escape, parallel systems and self-enclosure. However, its implications on action and order is quite different from that suggested for the rural China discussed here. The authors argue that the effect of disengagement has induced greater disjunction between centre and periphery and between polity and society, with a concomitant loss of the state's relevance to maintaining social order. They further contend that the state would not try to combat disengagement. It could reconcile itself to reduced control over a withdrawn periphery and even arrange for those in ruling positions to reap some profit from the situation. For details, see Azarya V., Chazan M. "Disengagement from the state in Africa: reflections on the experience of Ghana and Guinea" Comparative Studies in Society and History vol. 29 1987.

state regulations and guidance.

CHAPTER 5 REACTIONARY SUBSISTENCE

The coinage of reactionary subsistence is to address the 'fronting' relationship among the tri-actors. In its hard or soft form, the ultimate outcome would speak of the peasants' gradual departure from its passive dependency upon the rural government, and the local cadres. The availability of economic resources and social networks enables the peasants to become independent and mobilize support for its interests.¹ Reactions can be visible or invisible, mild to violent; the peasants, in either case, can maintain primary subsistence. Meanwhile, the proportion of the peasant's wherewithal at the disposal of the rural government and local cadres lessens as the sources diversified. Contradictions and conflicts, whether latent or manifest, characterizes reactionary subsistence in both rich or poor regions.

Nature of Agricultural Policies

The double-track price system is an attempt to widen the autonomy of the peasants. The binding force of contracts upon peasant is minimal as far as the peasants can contribute in monetary terms to the state instead of offering grains. Very often, the peasants delay the return of grains.² Furthermore, especially for those poor areas, the amount

1. A historical analysis contesting for an emergence of a honeycomb structure of local interests and solidarities that the state cannot completely penetrate, that is, localism, is exemplary of the reactionary subsistence. Localism can be regarded as the form of reactionary subsistence that takes shape in a geographical dimension. Shue, V. The Reach of the State: Sketches of the Chinese Body Politic Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.

2. In the county of Yonggan in Heilongjiang, there are seven villages that have not fulfilled their obligations to the state since the drawing of contracts. See "Thought of the farmland" in Sociology & Social Research 1990 no. 1.

stipulated for the unified purchase was set to be low. In other words, the grains could be sold back to the state at the negotiated price or a price near the market price. On one hand, this policy was intended to enliven the poor areas by giving concessions. On the other hand, the constraints imposed on the peasants in this region would be relatively fewer.¹

Level of Agricultural Collectivity

The increasingly scattered land lease of peasants makes it impossible for collective work, such as irrigation, to be coordinated by communes or brigades.² However, a freer flow of farmland has its own merits.³ The deconcentration and rearrangement of land lease indirectly

1. This refers to the counties of Guzhen, Fengyang, Wuhe, Huaiyuan, Huoqiu and Jiashan in the province of Anhui. See "The economic impact of contracted farming" Jiang Huai Lun Tan 1982, no. 5.

2. In the city of Mudanjiang in Heilongjiang, there are 60798 acres of farmland being divided into 9614 pieces with an average of 5.7 acres for each household. Machinery and capital-intensive farming techniques can hardly be used in these small patches. See "Thought on farmland" in Sociology & Social Research 1990, no. 1.

3. Various forms of land contracting are seen. Some give the land back to the team, which manages the land contracting on behalf of households. Another way is to contract the land from individual to individual without any changes in the terms of contract without the intermediary of the production team. The decision on land resumption would be more flexible depending upon the discretion of the individuals. The third way is called private contracting. The distinction is that the contracting households have to pay back at a lower price grains to the out-contracting households. The fourth one is exchanges among contracting households. Owing to the fragmented farmland of varying fertility level, management problems commonly arise on the use of irrigation water, chemical fertilizer, etc. Therefore, the peasants would take the initiative to exchange their farmland in order to have a standardized combination of farmland. Not only will the peasants have incentives in farming their own land but also they may exercise greater control and improvements on their farmland. Greater individual autonomy can be regarded as a substitute for agricultural collectivity. See "Permissions to the exchanges of farmland" Jiang Huai Lun Tan 1981, no. 1.

facilitate the gradual emergence of specialised households¹, which may diversify their businesses beyond the constraints of land or even gather a larger piece of farmland² for agricultural specialisation (e.g. grain specialization).³ Yet the specialised households would not be entirely free from constraints imposed by the rural government or cadres.⁴ The acquisition of fodder is a significant hindrance to the specialised households, primarily due to the ministry's inability to deliver the fodder.⁵ Besides, to gain access to sales outlet is also difficult for the specialised households. Nonetheless, restrictions upon the peasants are not insurmountable and attempts have been initiated to manage the

1. Specialised households in Anhui usually engage in one or two types of planting or husbandry. The revenue generated from this source averages to 50% or more of the total. The counties under study include Chuxian, Fengyang, Quanjiao, Tianchan, Jiashan. See "To have a view on the specialised households" in Jiang Huai Lun Tan 1982, no.5.

2. The nurturing of pigs, chickens, ducks, goats as well as the construction of orchards requires the gathering of scattered pieces of land.

3. Experiences in Guangdong and Anhui indicate that the peasants would abandon the farmland to become peasant-workers in enterprises. However, they may withhold the farm land but not contract them out for the fear of policy reversal. See, "To have a view on specialised households" Jiang Huai Lun Tan 1982 no.5.

4. Data in Fujian also point out that the proportion of entrepreneurial households is lower in villages that have high levels of cadre activity. This relationship holds independent of the degree of market accessibility and of county location, both of which have positive relationship. But what constitutes in the content of cadre activity is not clear because it only signifies the number of meetings convened in the township and county governments and attended by village cadres in the questionnaire. See, V. L. Young, F.W. "Peasant Entrepreneurs in China's Second Economy: An Institutional Analysis" Economic Development and Cultural Change vol. 39 no.2 1991.

5. In Anhui, there was an instance that the county department cannot provide adequate fodder to the specialised household who is responsible for pig raising for the whole team. As a result, the contract drawn between the household and team was declared void and the household had to sell the rest of the pigs. See "To have a view on specialised households" Jiang Huai Lun Tan 1982 no.5.

above two obstacles.¹

The introduction of the household responsibility system and the subsequent disorganisation of the collective created additional tasks to cadres, such as the drawing of contracts. In fact, cadres encounter tremendous difficulties in executing birth control, drawing purchasing contracts with the peasant and collecting grains from peasants.² The rural cadres pay particular attention to these issues and are sympathetic towards the peasants because they would probably reside in the village after retirement. Their personal interests, which coincide with the locality's, supercede state interests. The local government institution is on the brink of dismemberment.³

1. These in fact are the main differences from coercive ritualism. In reactionary subsistence, reliance on governmental institutional networks for resources would not be total. In this case, fodder company is encouraged to start their businesses and to establish contractual relationship with the specialised households. Companies specialised in the sale of agricultural products are now drawing contracts with specialised household to assure their market outlets. Despite their immature development, restrictions on specialised households are intractable. See "To have a view on specialised households" in Jiang Huai Lun Tan 1982, no. 5.

2. Widely regarded as agents and representatives of the state, the rural cadres are scolded by peasants when they are executing daily duties. There are some instances that peasants may threaten to risk their lives with those of cadres when the rural cadres intend to sterilize the peasants or when the cadres want to collect the grain that would have been collected three or four years ago. When their one and only one child died, peasant (already after sterilization) would go to the cadres to redress their grievances. See, "Transformation of family forces and its impact on rural village life" Sociology & Social Research 1989, no. 3.

3. In two villages of Guangdong, out of 16 local cadres, ten have joined the government for more than 20 years and three for more than 30 years. The non-prestigious position in the local government diminishes the attractions of being a cadre. See "weakening of village structure and its impact" Sociology & Social Research 1989, no. 1. "Reforming the village cadre system is the essential content to deepen the reform of rural village" Sociology & Social Research 1990 no. 1.

In some other instances, the debilitation of rural governmental machinery is accompanied with the widespread grievances from the peasants.¹ Because of the difficulty in acquiring means of production, the peasants tend to fight, scold and insult rural cadres.² What logically follows is that the morale of local cadres is very low, which does not escape the eyes of the populace. The tension further mounted whenever the cadres strongly assert the power of the government, as when they collecting tax, further antagonism results. The instructions from the government and party will be acquiesced only when they are in accord with interests of the peasants. Consequently, the cadres are placed in a sandwich position, bearing pressure from both the provincial government and the peasants. Cases in Shaanxi and Henan give an apparent conflictual relations between the peasants and the officials who create chemical fertilizer shortages during the planting seasons in order to boost the prices. The peasants were looting fertilizer plants when the army was called up to guard the supplies. This violence demonstrates that the government lost control over its own functionaries and the populace and other branches of the governing authorities are required to react the situation.³

Another palpable illustration of the reactionary subsistence, which is also subsequent to the dismantlement of communes, is found in

1. This refers to the county of Tangyin in Henan. See "Administration organisation in Tangyin in Henan" Science, Economy, Society 1999 no.6.

2. In this county, about 50% of the villages experience this situation and another 10% have worse situation, *ibid*.

3. Friedman E. "Deng versus the Peasantry: recollectivisation in the Countryside" Problems of Communism vol. XXXIX Sept Oct 1990.

a case study of development project sponsored by foreign funds.¹ The event happened in the period of the disorganisation of communes. It was then that individual households were given greater autonomy and initiatives in production. The Gaopoling project in particular and development projects in general have come into conflict with peasant aspirations and activities.

Origins of conflict are multiple. Firstly, the project was conducted on a land which had been traditionally regarded as wasteland. With the local government's tacit acquiescence, the land was freely utilised by the peasants, such as for the grazing of animals, periodic shifting cultivations, wood collection, etc. Therefore, control of the land was more subject to local pressure, rather than by the central government through the Ministry of Land Reclamation. The loosening of control by local government, the weakening of the commune authority structure under the production responsibility system and the aspirations of the peasant to utilise more land sanctioned by officials, all accounts for the climate favourable to the challenges levelled on the official authority by the peasants.

1. This illustration describes the Gaopoling Model Cattle Farm situated on the west coast of Hainan Island in an Autonomous Region forming part of Guangdong Province in southern China. John Ayres (author of the article) spent two years there as Project Manager responsible for the conduct and management of a development project jointly sponsored by the governments of Guangdong Province and New South Wales. Gaopoling Model Cattle Farm is a product of the 'sister state' relationship which has been established between New South Wales and Guangdong Province. Strictly speaking, this is a case of animal husbandry and pasture improvement but not specifically to peasants in planting. Yet it can exemplify the intricacy of the impact of collectivity agriculture. For details, see Nelson J. & Ayres J. "Development Projects and the Production Responsibility System in China: a case study" Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs 1993 Jan. no. 11.

Conflicts arise when there are development projects which promoted a significant number of peasants looking for better land resources for production. Also, land needs of the project are usually at odds with the peasants' needs, so conflicts are likely to result. In Gaopoling, when the land is still currently of marginal use to the peasants, land development on the boundaries of the Li commune would not draw attention from the Li people. But once the land becomes suitable for cultivation and grazing, conflicts over the right to use the land emerge.¹ The Project Manager estimated that once the Australians have left, both the local and provincial officials may arrive at compromises to the benefit of the peasants at the expense of face and international goodwill. In this case, the conflictual situation between the local peasants and the government is triggered off by the presence of a foreign development project, which demands for a collective control over the land previously claimed by the local peasants. The aforesaid argument contends that the existence of large scale agricultural collectivity enables and facilitates governmental control over peasants. However, in this instance, the agricultural collectivity established by foreign intrusion would cultivate uneasy situation and nuisance between local government and peasants.²

1. In the Gaopoling area, the project was seeking to gain control over land use to secure pasture and cattle improvements but to the peasants, the land is a valuable asset for rice paddy. Another incursion is the right of land access continuously claimed by the peasants of neighbouring communes, *ibid.*

2. It is recognized that there is a tendency for the local government to grant concessions in favour of the peasants (or leave them with great autonomy) as this is a customary practice in areas traditionally plagued by local interests (in this case, Hainan Island) given other things constant (i.e. without any foreign influence).

Slightly distinct from coercive ritualism and disintegrated autonomy, the determining significance of the condition of agricultural collectivity in reactionary subsistence is ambiguous. The level of agricultural collectivity is not strongly associated with reactionary subsistence. But the structure of pre-existing collectives provides the requisite resources which nourish visible reactionary actions. The collective per se is both the issue of debate and the context for debate.

Events happening immediately after the commencement of the household responsibility system can illustrate this polemic. Rich provinces feel the threat of the individualistic responsibility systems, and thus react by opposition to the new policy.¹ The household responsibility system is also a threat to the base on which the rich provinces flourish. For instance, Jiangsu's agricultural success has been grounded mainly on large-scale water conservation and field construction projects, high grain output combined with above quota sales to the state. The contributions of commune- and brigade-run enterprises to the investment in agriculture also contribute to the success.

However, the construction of projects in these rich areas is now by and large based on contracts, not administrative commands. With the

1. Poor provinces, such as Anhui and Shaanxi, support the system of total responsibility but the richer provinces like Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Liaoning expressed their reservations. Zweig D. "Opposition to change in rural China" Asian Survey vol. XXIII no. 7 July 1983. It can be remarked that the genuine institutional change is susceptible to the willingness of peasants. The reason for institutional changes can be attributed to the withdrawal of the so-called contingent consent, not solely the coercive repression. Levi, M. "A Logic of Institutional Change" in Cook, K. S. & Levi M. (ed.) The Limits of Rationality Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990.

allocation of grain fields to the household, the collectives find it difficult to achieve above quota sales. The weakening of collectives attenuates fund accumulation, making further developments infeasible. The level of economic wealth and development directly determines the response of peasants to the new responsibility system. In wealthy areas, peasants fear the new policies¹ for the threat to their economic interests.² Strong brigade enterprises can boost the income of all peasants in the collective, not just those working in fields or factories. The peasants would voluntarily work under the collective in anticipation of greater returns. Additionally, mechanization of the wealthy collectives liberate peasants from farm labour. However, recognising that the use of machinery is going to be complicated by household quotas - essential target in farm operations among various households, peasants are dissatisfied with future developments.³

1. Peasants are not dissatisfied with the entire responsibility system but rather particular packages. In this case, it is the most decollectivised form of agricultural production, the dabaogan.

2. By deduction, the response of peasants in poorer regions would be mild or even supportive to the household responsibility system. For instance, in the Yanan District in the province of Shaanxi, peasants' living standard had not been improved for ten years from 1972 to 1982. In these areas, the collective has served as a fetter on the peasant, closing private opportunities and employing political threats to maintain collective production. Now the collective is dissolved and each household farms on its own, a situation that the peasants do not oppose. Zweig, D. "Opposition to changes in rural China" Asian Survey vol. XXIII no. 7 July 1983.

3. To quote the sayings of one team leader: "The peasants here work hard. They do their work quickly. If I give them one day to do the work they do it in 1/2 day. So, if the people want to work on their private plots, they can. But most prefer to work on the collective fields. This year our income from the sidelines increased by 7000 yuan, mostly because we sent more people to the brigade enterprises. The collective income will increase and the peasants know this. They can calculate. They know the collective income will increase." The leader further explained, "Most people oppose the policy because there would be no collective economy. People fear 'total responsibility' (dabaogan). They like the collective method (san bao yi jiang) because they get fertilizer, insecticide, and 35 points for managing the fields, all from the team. If they get sick and can't plant, the team

Large collective works facilitate state intrusion upon peasants. Nonetheless, it is simultaneously a common arena on which reactionary resistance may be mobilized by lower level agricultural participants to respond against policies felt to be undesirable and directed from the central level.

Level of Commercialisation

In highly commercialised regions, peasants acquire their income from diversified sources and the accounting unit has shifted from the team or the brigade to individuals. Proximity to the market, urban area and transport networks become increasingly important in accounting for the sources of peasant income, implying the diminishing influence of cadres.¹ Peasants can individually produce, sell and participate in economic activities (production of small communities) though nominally

... Continued...

plants for them. Also, they will still get their grain ration." For details, see Zweig D. (1983) *ibid*.

1. This can be vindicated by the results of a survey on 30 villages from two periurban counties in Fujian. A sample of 725 households results in 624 completed interviews. The dependent variable, household income, is scheduled to be regressed by the independent variables, the pooled education attainment of the household head and spouse, the use of media, urban proximity, access to markets, former status before peasant entrepreneur (whether cadres or not). The results by and large suggest the gradual departure of the sources of peasant household income subject to the influence of cadres though the author attempts to suppress the possible influence of the status of those former cadres in effecting them to become peasant entrepreneurs. See Nee, V. "A Theory of Market Transition: from redistribution to markets in state socialism" American Sociological Review 1989, vol. 54, Oct. When the data are re-analysed to account for the growth of mean per-capita income from 1960-84, labelled as economic growth, it is discovered that the quality of transportation ($p < 0.001$) and access to urban market ($p < 0.05$), instead of marketing town and county town appear to be significant. See, V. "Institutional Change and Economic Growth in China: the view from the villages" Journal of Asian Studies 19, no. 1, Feb. 1990.

economic transactions have to be conducted under the commune. Exclusive of administrative charges, the portion of income which had not been registered jointly and listed in such things as bank statement could totally go to the peasants.¹ The lack of a comprehensive fiscal system to match with commercialisation leads to the possibility that some individuals fall outside the taxation bracket. The market and sales person (fulfilling the same function as the market and sale cooperatives in providing information on sales outlet, inputs of production, help to draw contracts, etc.) are scattered individuals engaging in retail transaction and can easily evade taxation since the departments simply cannot obtain the relevant information from records.²

The problem aggravates when there is a large number of individuals engaging in both agricultural production as well as retail transactions not connected with state enterprises, especially where transactions are mainly in cash unendorsed by banks.³ Tax collection, in order to be effectively accomplished, would have to be decentralised. As a result, the fact that the centralized ministries are burdened with the responsibility to collect tax only makes tax evasion even easier. In

1. This is more common in areas of free exchanges and market, e.g. Wenzhou. See "New directions of the development of agricultural commodity production-Wenzhou village" Agriculture, Economy and Society vol.3.

2. Some remedies adopted in Wenzhou are by collecting the tax from the scattered individuals indirectly via enterprises which may have dealings with the individuals. It may well be possible for tax burdens to be shifted to consumers.

3. Trouser-making in the county of Cangnan, plastic shoes in the county of Ruian, button-making in the county of Yongjia are some of the examples.

spite of strategies adopted to counteract tax evasion¹, these are offset by the effect of fiscal shortcomings in quite a number of state enterprises. Cash transactions do not involve invoices issued by the ministries which also accounts for the bulk of evaded taxation.² Market and sales persons (gong xiao yuan) are typical tax evaders whose taxable income is the sales registered at the transport and taxation ministries. By reporting a smaller value of goods sold, the market and sales persons can pay lesser tax. Rough estimates on the amount of tax evaded this way stand at 50% of the amount that should have been received.

The market and sales persons are capable of substituting for and complementing to the function of market. Their influence is found in areas characterised by familial industries and agricultural production essential to its viability.³ In Wenzhou, there are hundred thousands of market and sales persons, together with more than 400 markets they coordinate local familial industries with other regions by providing services in the purchase of raw materials, conveying market information

1. The strategy in Wenzhou is to stipulate all invoices showing the amount of expenditure to be issued by the ministries. Taxes are collected at time of the issuance of invoices (industrial and commercial tax, income tax).

2. In order to avoid tax, some individual enterprises merge with township enterprises, which possess the privileges of tax exemptions. These individual enterprises not only can utilise the networks established by the township enterprises but also enjoy tax exemption in the first three years, the exempted amount being apportioned between the individual and township enterprises. This can be found in the county of Nanghai in Guangdong. Their scale is reflected in their number in the county. There are 749 enterprises in the county, 19,615 people working under these enterprises with the productivity value of enterprises estimated at 2.8339 billion yuan in 1987. "Venture between individual and collective enterprises" Yue Shu Yan Jiu 1999 no. 4.

3. The region of Wenzhou including the counties of Yongjia, Leqing, Dongtou, Ouhai, Ruan, Pingyang, Cangnan, Taishun and Wencheng in the province of Zhejiang are illustrative of the situation.

as well as drawing contracts with wholesalers. The provision of loan services makes local capital accumulation possible. Combined efforts of individual households, market and sales person as well as markets of various kind, such as those providing means of production, capital funds, technology, information and labour services¹, can keep the reliance on rural government and cadres for gaining market outlet minimal. In fact, the actual involvement of the ministries in economic activities is very few in this region.

Additional to the provision of market outlet other than the support from cadres, the wholesale transformation of economic activities in the region intrinsically help minimize reliance upon cadres. There is an increase in the number of familial industries on the basis of individual household and a corresponding decrease in the number of people solely depending on agriculture². This implies that peasants will no longer resort to the nearly monopolised cooperatives for the supply of chemical fertilizers and other farm equipment. Instead, once the peasants can acquire raw materials from the market and sales person, who provide outlets to the products, the position of the peasants is hardly

1. In Wenzhou, the market sector looms large in the provision of services. The agricultural banks and credit unions, which are usually directly regulated by local government, can only supply 20% of funds while the rest requires support of civilian capital market, which are now flourishing. See "Insights of Wenzhou agricultural commodity market" Zhe Jiang Xue Kan 1988 no. 1. In fact, similar situations can also be found in other areas like Fuyang in Anhui, Suqian in Jiangsu. "To realise several theoretical problems of the model of Wenzhou" Zhejiang Xue Kan 1989 no. 5.

2. The proportion of people specialising in agriculture has decreased from 99% in 1978 to 28.5% in 1985 in Wenzhou while the proportion of industrial productivity contributing to the total productivity value is 17.6% in 1980 and 57.5% in 1985. In Wenzhou, industries are of smaller scale on the basis of individual household. See "A compared study on the model of Sunan and the model of Wenzhou" Quarterly Journal of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences 1987 no. 3.

subordinated to the rural government and the cadres.

The evasion and avoidance of the peasants is only one of the consequences of commercialisation. A positive aspect of commercialisation is the emergence of new economic cooperatives, which can be regarded as a functional alternative or equivalent of the market. Three types of economic cooperatives can be identified. First, those cooperatives directly engage in agriculture, forestry, pastoral maintenance, subsidiary industry and fishery. The cooperatives may be merely a kind of cooperation specialising in nurturing silkworm, animal husbandry, etc. The second type specialises in the processing of agricultural subsidiaries, such as mining, weaving, etc. Third, the cooperatives may provide services for agricultural production, like export services. Provisions also include phosphate fertilizer, irrigation networks, afforestation, etc. It is the last type that is most akin to a functional alternative of market.¹ Some cooperatives may even command market outlets of wide geographical coverage.²

1. One of the main distinctions of the new economic cooperatives from that of the notion of agricultural collectivity mentioned before is its independent and self-financing nature, with its internal operations quite immune from cadre influence. These new economic cooperatives cannot mobilize or distribute such resources as property, funds and labour force like the agricultural collectivity (commune enterprises and the later township enterprises). These cooperatives have to be self-reliant in financing, sourcing of raw materials and markets. Both profit and loss have to be borne by cooperatives themselves. The situations described only allude to Anhui though other areas may share similar characteristics. See "The conditions and characteristics of new economic cooperative" in Jiang Huai Lun Tan 1982 no.5.

2. This is an invention in the Pearl Delta which was historically established. A typical example is the banana transport and sales organisation which sent 500 people to the whole country to offer for sale resulting in a country wide sales network. See "The agriculture in the Pearl Delta" Guangdong She Hui Ke Xue 1987 no.1.

Specialised households may countervail various restrictions in the access to sales outlets by creating their own networks. They would go to the vicinity to gauge the needs and to adapt their own products to the demands. The formation of cooperatives among the specialised households further expand their market outlets to the nearby counties.¹ Specialised households near a navigable river have the advantage of water transport. The expansion of market outlets and the purchase of inputs of production are largely facilitated by the presence of a river.²

The greater autonomy enjoyed by the peasants can be reflected from the moves of cadres. Some rural cadres, especially production team leaders, abandoned the original post during the reform period so as to accommodate the responsibility system.³ In 1982, the provincial press reported that hundreds of production team leader positions became

1. This is the situation in Chaohu, Wuwei, Hanshan, Huainan. See "Specialised households are now deepening and widening the commodity economy" Jiang Huai Lun Tan 1984, no.4. This area is regarded as a small typical economic zone. See "The realisation of agricultural specialization" Jiang Huai Lun Tan 1986 no.4.

2. The products of the specialised households in Chaohu can easily reach the areas of Hefei, Nanjing, Wuhu and Maanshan. Most of the agricultural by-products and construction materials in Lujiang are transported to Hefei by water transport. There are 10,400 specialised households employing their own motor boats in the region. The problem of gaining access to market outlets and purchasing means of production can thus be alleviated. See "Specialised households are now deepening and widening the commodity economy" Jiang Huai Lun Tan 1984, no.4.

3. The withdrawal of cadres from the post in reactionary subsistence is distinct from that in disintegrated autonomy by the fact that the former one abandoned their post for the better alternatives available in other channels in commercialisation. It is the improvement in economic situations and the increase in conflicts arisen between cadres and peasant that pull the cadres out of the hierarchy. Materials adopted here are based on an article examining the press in the provinces of Guangdong, Fujian, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Sichuan, Liaoning, Shanxi and Heilongjiang and a series of interviews with migrants mostly from the provinces of Fujian and Guangdong. See Burns J.P. "Local Cadre Accommodation to the 'Responsibility System' in Rural China" Pacific Affairs 1985-86 no.1 vol.55.

vacant in Zhejiang, Fujian, Sichuan and Guangdong.¹ Official sources gave a variety of reasons accounting for the vacancies, suggesting the increase in quantity and complexity of the tasks, the lack of prestige among villagers and their insecure and low remunerations. The large number of former cadres becoming wealthy specialized households with their previous informal authority networks² indicates that the cadres have actually been allured by the attractive alternatives unfolded during the process of commercialisation. On the one hand cadres in those wealthy regions experienced gradual loss of a privileged position, on the other, the entire establishments have been corroded by the blossoming peasant economy, reinforcing the vigor of the sprouting economy.

Local Peculiarities

A survey on the problem of rural management directly address the operations of local organisation in villages.³ In which conflicts over

 1. In the county of Lunghai in Fujian, it was reported that 20% of the county's 3,700 production teams had their team leadership positions either vacant or held nominally only, *ibid.*

2. In 1983, authorities in Shanxi carried out a number of surveys on the background of specialised households whose income is higher than the average peasantry. In one survey from Ying county, 43% of specialized households were reported as current or former brigade or production team cadres. In other surveys, of the 250 households in the Shanxi counties, 47% were or had been cadres, while 26.6% of 304 specialised households in another Shanxi county came from a cadre background. Burns, J. P. (1985-86) *ibid.*

3. The findings are based on a survey targeted on township committee secretaries and county township party secretaries (making a total of 393 cadres) in nine counties of the Yibin region of Sichuan. "Present village social problems" Sociology & Social Research 1985 no. 5.

farmland and irrigation are found to be the prominent problems of rural management to the rural cadres. To counteract the rural cadres, the peasants count on the support of kinship members, rather than the neighbourhood. The mobilization of resources within the family and the kinship is subsequently reinforced, which makes it more difficult for the rural cadres to execute rural administration, especially the regulation of economic activities.¹ The rural social order, ensnared in the context of debilitated local administrative machinery as well as the augmentation of kinship network, can take its shape only with the help of direct law regulation from the state.²

The commencement of household responsibility system in rural villages has stimulated the re-emergence and growth of the natural collectivity bound by lineage. The re-mobilization within one's own lineage in rural villages is regarded a strategy to strengthen one's own power base vis-a-vis the opponent. This is most often employed in conflicts such as land allocation, chemical fertilizer allocation, irrigation, electricity and contract deal. Sometimes, connections would be deliberately contrived by marriages to distant area to extend networks for market outlets.

1. This is as reflected in the response of the rural cadres to the question of which aspect is the most difficult in rural management. 45.79% gave ineffective means of regulating economic activities. "Present village social problems" Sociology & Social Research 1988 no. 5

2. 60.11% of rural cadres answered that state law was the sole existing means available to monitor rural social order. "Present village social problems" Sociology & Social Research 1988, no. 5.

The resuscitation of lineage is found also in the rural villages. The rural cadres exert their control over areas as water sources, chemical fertilizer, electricity, large agricultural machinery, selection of school teachers, implementation of birth control, collecting of grains, issuing recommendations and testimonials to peasant for transfer to urban enterprises. As can be seen, their influence spans across the whole spectrum of life of the villages. Decisions concerning the villages bear implications on the respective lineages. The election of cadres and their subsequent performance closely relate to their lineage background. Peasants as team leaders find their kinship ties more indispensable than the organisational ties legitimized by the government. As organisations, kinship and the government are intermingled,¹ it is therefore beyond the rural cadres' capability to adjudicate village affairs. Rather, they play a reconciliatory role over the various interests of the village.² Still

1. Potter, S.H. "The Position of Peasants in Modern China's Social Order" Modern China vol.9 no.4 Oct, 1983.

2. The cadres regarded their work as half-public and half-private. In another instance, of the five village cadres, three have their kinship and marriage relationship tied up with the local interests. In the county of Xiangfen in Shanxi, family names dominate. Lian and Li are the major two while Mao and Zhou follow. The Lian family occupy most cadre positions. This is based on the survey on the counties of Linfen, Zhangzhi and Yanbei in Shanxi. See "Transformation of family forces and its impact on rural life" Sociology & Social Research 1988 no.3. The limitations in the power of the village head can also be found in Guangdong. The head of the team favoured the daughter of one of his relatives, and he encountered severe criticism for this. Later, the production brigade organized a general meeting in order to reconcile both parties but to no avail. Two months later, the villagers elected a new head. See Thireau, I. "Recent Changes in a Guangdong village" Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs 19 20 1988.

violent conflicts can be identified in rural areas.¹

Aside from the conflicts over agricultural production, the antagonistic relationship between peasants and cadres can also be reflected in the everyday life of peasants². Conflicts over tomb visiting have been initiated by heads of clan, which had been temporarily settled by cadres years ago. Most common property like the pasture, offices of cadres, and collective clinics are the targets of destruction, which was done in the disguise of grave visiting. Concurrently, there was the rise of clans, which are organised in actions against the rural cadres. This prompted the special attention of local cadres, but not always reaction, to deal with the situation³. It can be concluded that the gradual process of becoming autonomous among village communities from the state and from the local administration

1. Apparent conflicts might arise when peasants demand for the resumption of land confiscated during the land reform. This mobilization was mystified by the campaigns for the worship of god. Although a number of peasants were arrested, the rural cadres were threatened by them for their interference in their domain. Dung was thrown to the cadres and doors of cadres were pulled down. Only after quite a long period could the cadres resume duty. This is found in the county of Jiexi in Guangdong. "Weakening of village level governmental structure" Sociology & Social Research 1989 no. 3.

2. In regard to the everyday form of peasant resistance, see Scott J. Weapons of the weak: everyday forms of peasant resistance New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985. Also his summarised and extended essay, "Everyday forms of resistance" in Colburn F. D. (ed.) Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance London: M. E. Sharpe, 1989.

3. With special reference to the counties of Loudi, Xinchao, Lengshuijiang, Lianyuan, Longhui and Anhua in Hunan province, there are series of conflicts arising from grave visiting. Those participated in the mobilization include heads of the clan, cadres of production team, retired cadres. For instance, in 1993 the 'Duan' clan in Lengshuijiang joined the 'Duan' mass in Xinchao to destroy the premises of cadres. They did this in the name of the restoration of the aged grave, costing 10,000 yuan. Another instance reflects the weakening of local authority. In the period of campaign modelling agriculture for Dazhai, the Liu clan occupied the land of Pang for the accumulation of organic fertilizer. Now, the cadres can do nothing but stand to witness the conflicts, which are later resolved by the court. See "To observe the conflicts over grave of villages" She Hui 1993 no. 1.

allowed greater room for the reappearance of competitive struggles between villages. The conflicts would surface in festivals, like the dragon-boat race and ancestor worship on Qingming Day, etc.

Last but not least is the impact of cash crop. Areas rich in cash crops like vegetables and fruits are subject to pressure from the central state in time of grain procurement. It would be conflictual to impose high grain quota on peasants who acquire their large portion of income from cash crops. In some instances, there would be open conflict on the setting of grain quota but mostly, village cadres appease the peasants by cheating the commune cadres for more cash crop fields.¹

1. See Siu H. F. Agents and Victims in South China: accomplices in rural revolution New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989. The cooperative attitude of village cadres with the peasants would depend greatly on their origins, i.e. whether they work for their own villages, and their source of remuneration.

Concluding remarks

Reactionary subsistence endeavours to capture the dismembered state machinery in the locality and the reactionary, self-aggrandizing and self-metamorphosed peasant society. The reasons for the weakening of local rural government is not so much a matter of vacated cadre establishment, which is a symptom per se, as a matter of the inability of the state to retrench from the peasant society. In fact, this peasant society is imbued with the energetized economic and social impetus. The inability of the state to withdraw from the peasant society in an appropriate pace leaves the peripheral governmental structure unprotected and open for the erosive force of the peasant society. Without diminishing the number of rural cadres establishment and insisting on maintaining the rural administrative apparatus intact as well as implementing a considerable number of over-burdened tasks only propels the rural government into a position of turmoil and bankruptcy. Unless the role of rural government can be retreated to a regulatory function, the local administration will continue to deteriorate.

Concomitant with this weakened rural government machinery is the forefront agents of state facing the alluding motive of peasant society, which renders the disintegration of the teams of cadre. Rural cadres find it increasingly difficult to perform the role of state agents. The lucrative prospect of involving in the rapidly developing peasant

economy poses a constant temptation.¹ Societal conflicts as clan conflicts, remain a source of frustration in their job. The rural social order is only laxly knitted by the formalistic state laws, similar to the situation in disintegrated autonomy. However, the circumstances in reactionary subsistence is much less stagnant than that of disintegrated autonomy and the consequent formalistic order prescribed by state regulations are even more fragile.

1. Similar cases can be identified in Hungary, one of the socialist countries with a widespread capitalist institutions. It is argued that the existing entrepreneurs are people who come not from the most depressed or traditional backgrounds, but from those most devoted to entrepreneurial activities before the Soviet occupation. They can become entrepreneurs as they can maintain a certain degree of autonomy, immuned from a full-scale cadreification or proletarianization. See Szelenyi I., Manchin R., Juhasz Pal, Magyar Ballint, Martin Bill, Socialist Entrepreneurs: Embourgeoisement in Rural Hungary Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1955.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, a recapitulation of the arguments employed will be restated and summarised here. To have a more explicit articulation on the reflections of this thesis, several remarks on the findings in relation to the three perspectives synthesized in the introduction will also be drawn here. The entire study is to carve out the possible types of government-peasant relationship on the basis of separate, scattered and discontinuous reports, surveys and other published empirical data.

Three types of relationship are identified - coercive ritualism, disintegrated autonomy and reactionary subsistence, which can be regarded as the major patterns of government-peasant relationship. Apart from a mere description of the three types of government-peasant relationship, this thesis endeavours to specify the corresponding conditions associated with these three patterns respectively so as to form a coherent configuration.

To begin with, it is necessary to qualify the contestation portrayed in the preceding chapters. In order to have a typical major pattern to describe the government-peasant relationship, certain distortions of reality would be resulted in some respects. To gravitate closely the empirical reality, the three typical patterns can individually be comprehended as a melange of three, which is characterised by the predomination of one constructed type. In spite of the possibility of concurrent existence of the three types and the incidence of predomination of one over the rest in one situational context, it can squarely address the reality more appropriately. This may indicate one constructive way to appreciate the usefulness of the

three typical patterns of government-peasant relationship.

To explicate the seemingly complicated relationship among several variables presented previously, the following table may help elucidate an integrated view.

	Coercive	Disintegrated	Reactionary
	<u>Ritualism</u>	<u>Autonomy</u>	<u>Subsistence</u>
Nature of			
Agricultural	strict	ineffectively	loose
Policies		implemented	
Level of			ambiguous
Agricultural	high	low	(high &
Collectivity			low)
Level of			
Commercialisation	low	low	high
Local	state	self-	existence
Peculiarities	interference	autonomous	of kinship
	in a	minority	lineage
	historically	nationality	
	well-established		existence
	industrial		of
	infrastructure		cash
			crops

Fig. 7 Conditions associated with the respective government-peasant relationship

The essential conditions of the three types of government-peasant relationship are to be reiterated. Low level of commercialisation (poor development of transport and market outlet) and high level of agricultural collectivity (concentrated land lease, existence of large development project, highly-industrialised rural enterprises) together with strict micro policy context would largely attest coercive ritualism. Disintegrated autonomy is characterised by a low level of commercialisation and a low level of agricultural collectivity. The essential condition that advances the autonomy of peasants is the high level of commercialisation. The presence of agricultural collectivity in reactionary subsistence may become a self-rebellious arena in which contest exists between the government and the peasant, formerly an indirect device for state penetration. Some local peculiarities would certainly reinforce the reactionary elements.

This paragraph summarises the prevailing pattern of the government-peasant relationship in the post-Mao rural China. In terms of the number of peasants and the geographical coverage in which the source of peasant income is generated, reactionary subsistence is disputed as the most decisive one in comprehending the government-peasant relationship. As mentioned before, provinces in coastal areas populated with the greatest percentage of people by and large demonstrate characteristics of reactionary subsistence. Basically, peasants can enjoy greater autonomy in making their own livings. By forming voluntary economic associations to explore inter-provincial transactive exchanges and diversifying their conduct of economic dealings, like the familial industries, the peasants can be relatively free in making their economic

and production decisions. The widespread emergence of peasant entrepreneur in the form of specialised households accompanied by numerous individual private retail households enables a minimal reliance on the rural cadres for the market outlet.¹

Peasants may in sometimes rebel against the village government and cadres. Violent attempts to acquire the means of production from the rural cadres are not uncommon. In the name of celebrating traditional festivals and some customary rural rituals, the peasants may redress their grievances against the rural cadres. The rural cadres, on the one hand, have to implement the burdensome policies² which they are unfamiliar with. On the other, they are facing with attractive money making opportunities outside the state sector. Having the access to networks, former cadres are potentially successful peasant entrepreneurs.³ The recent trend seen in the fleeing away of cadres from the village government reflects this situation. Many tasks that should have been the duties of rural cadres are left unattended.

1. See the exposition of Wenzhou model as an example, Nolan, P., Dung, F., (ed.) Market Forces in China: competition and small business, the Wenzhou debate London: Zed Books, 1990.

2. Implementation of many daily routine tasks is necessary for the success of rural reforms, such as administering contracts, dividing farmland, appropriating means of production, maintaining collective means of production, like tractors, large sprayers, threshers, etc. It is through the execution of these duties by the cadres that the rural government can function in a less burdensome and less circumscribed rural context. As a consequence, successful retreat of governmental control on the peasants is greatly contingent on the committed execution of duties by the cadres.

3. However, this will be most prominent when the profitability of engaging in business is evident. Otherwise, rural cadres may prefer to stay in the village government, especially the cadres reaching retirement age. In time of uncertain policy direction, the mentality of "wait and see" among the rural cadres may convince them to retain in the government.

Based on the above, it is contended here that the state structure has been inextricably enmeshed in a dilemmatical local context. While the village government has been reorganised along the structure of communes and production brigades, it is encouraged to implement a wide array of decentralising policies, in which they have no previous experience. In the locality, the state structure is susceptible to the local disintegrative momentum represented by the non-state economic forces and societal corrosive forces.¹

In fact, the state in the local context is retrenching de facto, albeit unwillingly, as reflected by its inability to implement decentralising policies. The socialist China at its transformative stage, being given a considerable degree of commercialisation, sees its substantial elements for realising the state intent gradually evaporates.² What is left behind is a vacated and decadent local state infra-structure.³ Its incapability can be witnessed from its inability to extricate from the web of local interests. Even so, the constitution of the local order becomes a vacuum because of the weakened local administrative apparatus and the withdrawal of rural cadres. Consequently, the state-society confrontation is directly and inevitably

1. For a detailed description of the significance of lineage in affecting the daily rural administration, see Potter S.H., Potter J.M. China's Peasants: the anthropology of a revolution Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

2. This can be demonstrated by the continuous fleeing away of rural cadres and the subsequent vacancy of rural administration.

3. The concept of state infra-structure is extracted from Mann, M. "Autonomous Power of the State: its origins, mechanisms and results" in Hall J.A. State in History New York: Basil Blackwell, 1996. In rural China, the situation is that there is an elaborate state infra-structure, but not state infra-structural power.

embroiled within the formalistic state law which is the basis constituting the local order, rather than the traditional local cadres.

The next thing discussed after the major pattern of government-peasant relationship prevailing in the post-Mao era is its relationship with the three perspectives synthesized in the introduction. The neo-institutionalists believe the process of state retrenchment as symbolic of the government-peasant relationship in the reform era. This argument is in line with the accounts of both empirical researches and logical deduction of the government-peasant relationship from the preceding period.¹ The implication of clientelism on the government-peasant relationship is a supposition of the local cadres' control over the peasants. For the proponents of localism, the government-peasant relationship in the reform era is discerned in the intended, strengthened state capacity in the rural context, as exemplified by the various reform policies. This argument also shares certain deductions

1. Reforms in the near decade relax stern state control on grass root level. It is commonly maintained that there was a totalitarian state control on peasants in Mao's era. For details, see Whyte M.K., Small Groups and Political Rituals in China Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974, Whyte M.K., Parish W.L. Village and Family in Contemporary China Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979, Schurmann F. Ideology and Organisation in Communist China Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966. For specific case studies on the Maoized way of life and rituals, see Chan A., Madsen P., Unger J., Chen Village: the recent history of a peasant community in Mao's China Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984, also, Madsen R., Morality and Power in a Chinese Village Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984. The latter one has more elaborations on the types of local political leadership in rural China.

from the historical perspective.¹

Anchoring at the findings of this thesis, the above implications of the government-peasant relationship from the three perspectives appear to be insufficient to describe the major pattern of the relationship. Neither the premise of state retrenchment nor state strengthening can be employed independently to detect the dynamic relationship between the government and the peasants. It is the inability of the state to withdraw from the local rural context that constitutes the main features of the government-peasant relationship. The resultant situation is the local state apparatus become entangled with the rural web-like interests and the subsequent debilitated rural administration.

The third endeavour of this thesis is to offer interpretations on the seemingly scattered, fragmented and contradictory observations of the government-peasant relationship. This work seeks to provide the respective conditions under which the relevant government-peasant relationship may flourish. By doing so, insights for assessing the importance as well as the pervasiveness of the current empirical findings on the relationship between government and peasant can be

1. It is believed that villages before the onset of communist regime are quite impermeable to the penetration of imperial state. See, Huang, P.C.C. The Peasant Economy and Social Change in North China Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985, Fei, H.T. Peasant Life in China, Duara P. Culture, Power and the State: Rural North China, 1900-1942 Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988. With the inception of the communist regime, it is even argued that this situation is further reinforced by the party and administrative machinery in the local context. Reforms in the post-Mao era are maintained to strengthen the state in the local context by breaking down the so-called cellular structure of the rural village. See Shue, V. The Reach of the State Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988.

obtained. For instance, it can be succinctly put forward under which conditions the so-called peasant autonomy can be realised.

Fourthly, and more importantly, the notion of disintegrated autonomy enhances our understanding on the government-peasant relationship. The three perspectives based on current empirical findings are being synthesized for analytical purposes. The actual incidence of clientelism can be theoretically incorporated under the heading of coercive ritualism. Coercive ritualism embraces the possible patron client relations on which are founded the bases for the manoeuvre of cadres. Both localism and neo-institutionalism can be subsumed under the premise of reactionary subsistence for it assumes the existence of confrontations between peasants and cadres as well as the autonomy of peasants.

Disintegrated autonomy gives descriptions of situations currently overlooked by empirical researches. The dissociating relationship among cadres, peasants and the central and the rural government is a typical feature found in areas characterised by a low level of commercialisation and a low level of agricultural collectivity. Both clientelism and neo-institutionalism appear to neglect the possibly respective self-sustenance of cadres and peasants.¹

1. It has to be noted that localism is different from disintegrated autonomy in spite of their seeming similarities. The former one refers to the local collective action in an effort to resist central directives felt to be disadvantageous. However, disintegrated autonomy connotes the absence of collective action among peasants, cadres and middlemen. Their room for manoeuvre only exists to the extent of their individual seeking for survival.

The socialist China at her transformative stage is being trapped between the two poles of outright marketisation and thorough dismantlement of collective. If coercive ritualism, disintegrated autonomy and reactionary subsistence are reliable descriptions of the government-peasant relationship, such stagnancy is plausibly a normal situation which will likely persist, rather than a widely believed 'transformative stage'.¹ The transformation of the socialist China would not be a simple transformation in nature or a once and for all bounce forward.

1. The smoothness of retreat of communism may be overestimated by some authors and the difficulties encountered in the stages of retreat are underestimated. For the too-easily drawn four phases in the retreat of communism, communist totalitarianism, communist authoritarianism, post-communist authoritarian and post-communist pluralism, see Brzezinski, Z. The Grand Failure: The Birth and Death of Communism in the Twentieth Century New York: Macmillan, 1990.

APPENDIX

This part gives the sources of the cases and geographical coverage of the cases analysed in the text. Basically, the periodicals published in Chinese in the University Service Centre in the Chinese University of Hong Kong are the main source of cases. In addition, cases are extracted from various articles published in academic journals in English, and books on the government-peasant relationship. Interviews with several current graduate students of the Chinese University of Hong Kong give some useful information. The cases collected nonetheless are rather fragmented in nature. Each may deal with issues of a different sort. But their implications on the government-peasant relationship is quite explicit. The following periodicals are used for the analysis:

Agriculture, Economy and Society
Guangdong She Hui Ke Shui
Guizhou she Hui Ke Shui
Hebei Xue Kan
Jiang Huai Xue Kan
Jiang Huai Lun Tan
Jiangxi She Hui Ke Xue
Ningxia She Hui Ke
Quarterly Journal of the Shanghai Academy
Science, Economy, Society
She Hui
She Hui Ke Shui (Gansu)
Social Sciences in China
Sociological Studies
Sociology & Social Research
Xinjiang She Hui Ke Xue
Xue Shu Yan Jiu
Zhejiang Xue Kan

Background of the three interviewees (who request to remain anonymous):

- Mr. A : He is the son of a former production team leader in Heilongjiang. Mr. A was brought up and received primary education in Heilongjiang. Later, he went to Lanzhou, provincial capital of Gansu for higher education.
- Mr. B : He was brought up in Chengdu, provincial capital in Sichuan and received education in Beijing. He has experiences in the period of "down to the countryside".

Mr. C : He was brought up in Xi'an, provincial capital in Shaanxi and received education there.

The geographical coverage of the cases (the level of analysis is county):

Anhui: Anqing, Lujiang, Wuwei, Chaoxian, Hexian, Quanjiao, Chuxian, Changfeng, Huoqin, Dingyuan, Fengyang, Jiashan, Tianchang, Wuhe, Huaiyuan, Guzhen, Jieshou, Fuyang.

Fujian: Zhangzhou, Longyuanshi, Quanzhou, Putian, Shanmingshi, Nanping.

Gansu: Linxia, Dingxi, Qinan, Dangchang.

Guangdong: Lianjiang, Enping, Nanhai, Dongguan, Huiyang, Jiexi.

Guizhou: Weining, Puding, Anshun, Guiyang, Longli, Guiding, Kaiyang, Wengan, Tianzhu, Zunyi.

Hebei: Yutian, Pingshan.

Heilongjiang: Mudanjiang.

Henan: Tangyin, Yanjing, Lankao, Huangchuan.

Hubei: Zhongxiang.

Hunan: Changde, Loudi, Anhua, Lianyuan, Lengshuijiang, Longhui, Xinchao.

Jiangsu: Nanhui, Suzhou, Baoshan, Taicang, Wuxi, Changzhou, Haimen, Rugao, Nantong, Kunshan, Changshu, Suqian, Jiading.

Jiangxi: Nanchang

Ningxia: Yanchi, Tongxin, Jingyuan.

Shaanxi: Wuqi, Zhidan, Luochuan.

Shandong: Anqiu, Yexian, Huangxian, Muping, Rongcheng, Dongming.

Shanxi: Zuoyun, Youyu, Pinglu, Linfen, Zhangzhi.

Sichuan: Qionglai, Yibin.

Xinjiang: no specific county.

Zhejiang: Qingyuan, Taishun, Cangnan, Pingyang, Wencheng, Ruian, Longquan, Ou hai, Wenzhoushi, Dongtou, Shuichang, Yongjia, Leqing, Wenling, Xianju, Sanmen, Xinchang, Jiande, Tonglu, Linan, Fuyang, Yiaoshan, Cixi, Yuyao, Anji, Yuhang, Deqing, Haining.

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